Sandwell
CHRONICLE

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CHEERS! REOPENED ABBEY HOTEL IS THE TOAST OF BEARWOOD

Right, Neena Gill, with, from left, campaigner Julie Birley, Anesh Sharma, Baljinder Singh and Councillor Bob Piper

IT was cheers all round when a much-loved community pub reopened following fears it would be redeveloped for housing.

A campaign to save The Abbey Hotel in Bearwood was launched after it closed suddenly in February, with a petition gathering more than 2,000 signatures.

Ward councillor Bob Piper and West Midlands MEP Nina Gill joined campaigners at a celebratory opening event.

Councillor Piper said: I've been fully behind the campaigners' fight and it's great to see it open again."

The Grade II-listed pub was a favourite with locals but looked set to suffer the same fate as others in the town and nationally which have fallen victim to plummeting trade as a result of the no-smoking ban and cheap supermarket alcohol.

Despite the petition, pub chain Stonegate, went ahead and closed the pub and sold the site. The management at the Abbey announced the pub's closure on its Facebook page, saying it was 'a very sad time.'

The building was snapped up by developers for £375,000 but their plans were scuppered when campaigners secured an Asset of Community Value designation for the premises. Nine months on, the pub, in Abbey Road, has been taken over by new owners. Anesh Sharma and Baljinder Singh, and relaunched as a bar and grill.

Teaching assistant Julie Birley, aged 47, who led the fight along with Rebekah Mone, said: "I've drank there for 16 or 17 years and there was such a great community feel about the pub that it was a shock back in January when it was announced it would shut in five weeks. When the previous owners failed to get planning permission in 2001 to knock down the walls and make one big bar area, they lost interest in the place.

"People have missed the pub. They've tried other places but it's not been the same. The official opening went really well. Neena Gill and Bob Piper made a great speeches.

"This part of Abbey Road is thriving at the moment, and this is the only Indian Grill style pub in Bearwood. They've only got a limited menu at the moment but people have already been so complimentary."

In recent years The Barleycorn in Bearwood Road, The Thimblemill in Thimblemill Road and The Talbot on Hagley Road have closed. Councillor Piper said: "The Abbey was different in that it is one of just four listed buildings in Bearwood, along with Lightwoods House and bandstand, Thimblemill Library and Thimblemill Baths. It is good to see it back in business."

Woman who lost daughter heads Brake campaign

BRAVE MOTHER IN 'GO SLOW' APPEAL

THE mother of a woman killed after being hit by a speeding driver in Great Barr has appealed to motorists in a moving campaign video with road safety charity Brake.

Two of Avril Child's daughters, Sarah and Claire, were both struck in the horrific collision as they walked across the Birmingham Road back in 2012.

Sarah, aged 26, was killed, while Claire, 24, who was pregnant at the time suffered nerve damage in her right leg and was unable to walk for two weeks.

Sarah, right, with Claire, left and their other sister Hannah in the middle

Part of the Brake road safety campaign video featuring Avril Child

Speeding

Her baby was uninjured, and born two months later – a daughter called Evie. In the powerful 'Go Slow' campaign video Mrs Child speaks to camera and directly addresses speeding motorists: "Do you really want to have blood on your hands because you want to get somewhere faster?"

Mrs Child also points out people's misconceptions of how dangerous a car can be, stating: "The car you drive isn't made of cotton wool – it's a ton of metal." The driver, Amirul Islam, from Lozells, Birmingham, was jailed for four years in 2013 after pleading guilty to causing death by dangerous driving over the incident in 2012.

Birmingham Crown Court heard how he was travelling at an average of 64mph at the time of the crash, when the speed limit was 40mph.

Mrs Child and her family have since successfully campaigned to get it reduced to 30mph on that stretch.

Mrs Child who lives in Kingstanding said: "In the wrong hands a car is a lethal weapon.Unfortunately there are so many stories like mine."

The A34 Birmingham Road continues to see deaths, with 88-year-old Mary Elizabeth Humpherson, known as Betty, killed by a hit-and-run driver in October.

A petition calling for further action on the dangerous dual carriageway was also launched following the deaths of Zoe Shapiro, 17, in February and Charlie Heywood, 19, in June.

Mrs Child's campaign video is part of the Brake Pledge, which asks drivers to do all they can to improve road safety, including to go slow, stay sober and make sure everyone in their vehicle is secure.

The video is available to watch at the website of the Chronicle's sister paper, expressandstar.com

ROADS

One-way traffic hope to halt jams

A CONGESTED street in Smethwick is to become one-way in a bid to solve long-running traffic problems.

The number of parked cars which line both sides of Corbett Street has often meant two rows of traffic being unable to pass each other, leading to delays.

Council bosses said they had considered introducing parking permits but felt the move would be unpopular with residents on the road, which joins onto High Street. The change means vehicles will only be able to travel in a southerly direction along the street.

Sandwell Council said the majority of residents were in favour of the one-way zone.

ECONOMY

Region survives Brexit aftermath

ECONOMIC growth in the West Midlands has held up better than expected in the months following the Brexit vote, according to a new report.

But the region's economy will probably slow next year, although a recession is unlikely says accountancy group PwC in its latest UK Economic Outlook.

PwC's forecast projects GDP in the West Midlands will grow by around 1.7 per cent in 2016, slowing to 0.8 per cent in 2017.

ENTERTAINMENT

Singer Joe ready to make an impression

EVERGREEN singer and impressionist Joe Longthorne is returning for a concert at Wednesbury Town Hall after a successful fight against cancer. He will be at the Holyhead Road venue on December 1.

His big break came in 1981 when he was a finalist on the Search for a Star TV show, which led to appearances at the London Palladium with Bob Hope and The Talk of the Town. Joe has received gold and platinum discs for his albums, enjoyed sell-out concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, as well as touring Australia several times.

Tickets cost £20 and can be bought from the box office on 0121-556-4914.

INSIDE

SNOW JOKE FOR COUNCIL CHIEF

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Campaign launched against bullying

Staff and students with Councillor Hackett

SANDWELL Council is working with West Midlands Police to deliver workshops during Anti-Bullying Week.

The SHAPE programme's main objective is to listen to children and young people across the borough.

Anti-bullying Week was launched at Wodensborough Ormiston Academy in Wednesbury. Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children's services was at the school to kick-start the activities.

He said: "No child should be subjected to bullying and our schools in Sandwell all have strict policies and will not tolerate this sort of behaviour.

"Anti-bullying week gives us, schools and the police the chance to reinforce this message and educate children about what they can do if they are being bullied.

"I know this is high on every parents' agenda and it is something the council the police and our local schools take very seriously."

Activities include interactive workshops, games and videos with the intention of getting the children to understand what bullying is and how to report it. Cyber-bullying and how to stay safe on the internet are on the agenda and youngsters are also asked to design an e-poster aimed at stopping bullying.

The winner will have their e-poster distributed to all schools and it will be used by the SHAPE Programme to promote anti-bullying in the future.

Young people affected by bullying are encouraged to talk to an adult at school, family members or by calling Childline on 0800 1111.

200 parents fined over term-time school leave

MORE than 200 fines were handed out to parents across Sandwell in the last school year for taking children on holiday during term time.

Sandwell Council raked in £12,960 after dishing out 216 fines.

A Freedom of Information request has also revealed the council pursued 158 prosecutions against parents for taking their children out of school without permission in the last academic year.

Councillor Preet Gill said: "Whilst I understand that to parents this might seem excessive, they need to consider the impact of taking a child out of school during term time, on the child.

She added: "We want children in Sandwell to have the best education they can, but they need to be in school for that to happen."

The fines, known as Education Penalty Notices, were first introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in an effort to stop children taking time off school without reason.

Penalty

Parents and carers are not permitted to take their children out of school during term time, and may be fined if they do so without consent. It is up to the head teacher or principal to decide if an absence is authorised or not.

If it is not, a penalty notice will be issued, with a fine imposed of £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

Data collected by law firm Simpson Millar shows that across the UK councils issued more than 114,000 finesin the last academic year.

Julie Robertson,a solicitor with the firm, specialises in helping families challenge unreasonable fines, and highlighted a discrepancy in how they are imposed.

She said: "What one head teacher agrees are special circumstances, another doesn't. It is a postcode lottery.

"We need more consistency and, in some areas, more common sense," she said.

"Clearly, some schools are using their discretion appropriately where the parents are sensible in their choices and decisions. Others seem to be rather abundant in slapping parents with a fine regardless of the circumstances."

Steve hopes champs will clear up

Sandwell Council Leader, Councillor Steve Eling, asking for Snow Champions to come forward

COMMUNITY-MINDED Snow Champions will be helping to keep Sandwell clear of ice and snow for the sixth year running.

The council is providing snow shovels and salt shakers to people willing to clear pavements and pathways this winter.

Five hundred kits, which include 6kg of salt, a shovel and a high-vis vest, are available for new Snow Champions who haven't applied to join the scheme in previous years. Over the past five winters, 5,000 Snow Champions have helped to clear snow from hundreds of miles of pavements and paths – preventing slips, trips and falls.

Council Leader Councillor Steve Eling said: "We want people to help out a neighbour by clearing snow from their path or driveway or by putting salt down on pavements.

"I'm very pleased that so many community-minded people want to help each other. If we do get a cold snap, I'll be looking forward to seeing so many people clearing snow and ice and making it easier for everyone to get around."

Anyone who isn't already a Snow Champion who would like to become one should go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/snowchampion to apply. Applications open at 12pm on Wednesday 23 November. Kits are expected to be claimed quickly.

Anyone who doesn't have access to a computer at home can visit their local library which has free internet access, or alternatively pop into your local housing office.

Boy admits to burglary at property hit by flood

A BOY has admitted taking part in a daytime burglary and stealing items of sentimental value from a flood-hit house.

The 16-year-old, who cannot be named, accompanied Robert Kells, 21, after he targeted the property in Hamstead, near Great Barr, on August 8.

The property, on Hamstead Road, had been empty since a flash flood hit it on June 8 and the duo were spotted around it at about 3.30pm. A worried neighbour called police and the pair were caught.

They were found by police with a gold ring which had belonged to the occupant's late sister, a mobile phone, stamps and a photograph, Wolverhampton Crown Court court heard last month.

Kells, of no fixed address, said he was clearing items so he could lie down. He said a friend had given him keys to the house and was going to squat there because he was homeless.

Their victim gave a statement to police, which was read out when Kells was sentenced to three years in prison last month.

She said: "This has overwhelmed me. I have gone through a lot lately with family passing away and the flood damage to my home. All the belongings which survived had sentimental value."

The boy admitted the crime abut will be sentenced at Birmingham Youth Court on November 30.

A pre-sentence report will be prepared because of the 'enormous' improvement to his behaviour.

Chief's legal aid bid on bombings

WEST Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson has said the families of those killed in the Birmingham pub bombings must all be granted legal aid for their inquests in order to 'make the process just'.

The families of the 21 people who were killed in the IRA attack have fought a long battle to be granted legal aid ahead of the reopening of their inquests, just as those who were affected by the Hillsborough disaster were.

They were left furious after the Government ruled that the families will not be granted aid.

Mr Jamieson was speaking on the 42nd anniversary of the atrocity.

Some families have said they might walk out of the inquests if they are not granted legal aid.

Bruno in extra date at the Barclaycard Arena

AMERICAN singer-songwriter Bruno Mars has added extra dates to his UK tour next year.

He had already announced one concert at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena on April 24 and will now also perform there the following day – April 25.

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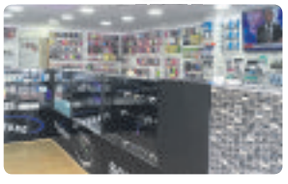

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Blood clot after op led to death of woman, 76

A WOMAN died from a blood clot in her leg more than a fortnight after having her knee replaced, an inquest heard. Joan Walton, aged 76, had become increasingly immobile in recent years having suffered with arthritis.

In late August her left knee was replaced at Russells Hall Hospital and initially she recovered well. But after 12 days she began experiencing breathlessness and on September 16 she collapsed at her home in Park Lane West, Tipton, and stopping breathing. She died the next day.

Black Country coroner, Zafar Siddique, reached a 'narrative' conclusion which linked her death to complications following the operation.

The inquest heard Mrs Walton underwent a total knee replacement on August 31. She was discharged on September 3 as doctors were satisfied she had regained enough mobility to return home. After initially recovering well at home she collapsed on September 11 having become short of breath while climbing the stairs.

She saw a GP the next day and suffered no further problems for three days. But on September 16 she again became short of breath and a different GP visited. Hours later she collapsed and stopped breathing. She was revived by paramedics and again at hospital, but died the next morning.

A post-mortem found Mrs Walton had bilateral deep vein thrombosis in her calves and that her death was due to recurrent pulmonary embolism due to restricted mobility caused by the operation.

Festive concert tickets on sale

TICKETS are on sale for a charity concert at West Bromwich Town Hall.

The 127th Christmas concert in West Bromwich will raise funds for Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children and Cares Sandwell. It takes place on December 3 at 7.30pm. Mayor of Sandwell Councillor Julie Webb will attend.

Sandwell parents provides play and leisure opportunities for disabled children and Care Sandwell supports disabled people and their carers.

Phil Challoner will compere the event and also perform. Other acts include the Halesowen Brass Band and Sandwell and District Scouts Choir.

Tickets are £2 on 0121 569 3041 or 3044 or by emailing mayors_parlour@sandwell.gov.uk

Getting crafty on the Wildside

CRAFTY folk are encouraged to get in the Christmas spirit with a special gift and decoration-making session.

Wildside Activity Centre in Hordern Road, Whitmore Reans is holding the event on December 3, 11am-3pm.

Church building on market again

The Church of God of Prophecy

A PLACE of worship in the heart of Smethwick is up for sale once again despite numerous bids to save it.

A religious leader tried to save The Church of God of Prophecy last year after it was first put up for sale.

Richard Umar Azeemi, from House of Praise Ministries which is also located in Regent Street, is part of a group which has previously launched several bids to save the church.

Last August, Mr Azeemi insisted it was vital that the building remained as a place of worship. Nothing has been done since and the church has gone up for sale again. The town centre building is in Regent Street near its junction with Fearon Place and is just a short walk away from Smethwick Galton Bridge railway station. It has an asking price of £425,000.

The premises comprises two church buildings; the principal building includes a large open plan room with a baptism pool, toilet, office accommodation and a first floor balcony with stadium seating. The rear building, which formerly housed a Sunday school, features a function room with stores, kitchen and a toilet. Councillor Richard Marshall said: "I'm a builder by trade so I hate buildings being left empty, any use of any building is better than no use.

"We've already got enough empty buildings in Smethwick and Sandwell, we don't need any more.

"There are already three other baptist churches within the area that people use already so there must not be enough demand for The Church of God of Prophecy."

The church is 0.2 miles away from Smethwick Rolfe Street and 0.8 miles from The Hawthorns stations.

Fly-tipping fines of £400 rubber-stamped

LITTER louts who illegally dump waste and rubbish in Sandwell will face fixed fly-tipping fines of £400 from next month.

Fines for those caught fly-tipping will be introduced on December 1. The council's cabinet passed the resolution at a meeting last week.

The council has decided to impose the highest possible fine allowed under the Unauthorised Deposit of Waste (Fixed Penalties) Regulations 2016, which came into force in May.

This stated that as an alternative to prosecution under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, local authorities could issue fines which are no lower than £150, but no more than £400.

Sandwell Council has decided to set the fine at the highest level available, saying it reflects the importance attached by the authority to discouraging fly-tipping.

Councillor Preet Gill, cabinet member for public health and protection, said: "We welcome these new legal powers allowing us to issue fixed penalty notices to anyone caught dumping rubbish.

"Fly-tipping is anti-social and unsightly and it's a financial burden on the council, which is left with the cost of cleaning up.

Warning

"Most Sandwell residents and business get rid of their waste responsibly but for those who don't our warning is clear – when we catch you, you will be fined £400. If you don't pay, you will end up with a court summons."

Councillor Maria Crompton who represents the Tividale ward, where there have been several recent large scale fly-tipping incidents, questioned how many perpetrators could actually be identified.

"Out of every 1,000 interim reports, less than half have evidence in them, and out of those half, there are less than 75 per cent that have actually been taken to fruition, through court," she said.

In response, Councillor Gill said cameras had been relocated to hot-spot areas to enable better evidence to be gathered. The number of officers able to issue notices has also been increased.

Approximately 2,000 tonnes of waste are removed each year from the public highway, parks and open spaces in Sandwell. Between July 2015 and June 2016, Environmental Health received more than 1,000 reports about dumped rubbish, but very few led to prosecution.

From left Cpl James Bloxham, Cpl Daniel Pearce, Cadet Joshua Willcocks, Cadet Kacy Richards and Pilot Officer Colin Shaw

Air cadets appeal as minibus is stolen

AN air cadet squadron has been left devastated by the theft of its minibus and is appealing for its return.

The 888 (Oldbury) Air Training Corps, based on Vicarage Road, says the theft will make it difficult to get to and from activities.

The minibus, which was bought from the army in 2015, was taken at around 11.30pm last Thursday after the offenders broke in through a fence, damaged security locks and used tools to break the locks.

On leaving, they turned right towards Oldbury and Smethwick. West Midlands Police confirmed it is investigating.

Officer in charge of the 888 ATC, Pilot Officer Colin Shaw, said: "The minibus was a lifeline for us, and is the only way we can transport our 80 cadets to the many activities we do on the weekend. Without it, we will very likely have to cancel a number of events.

"If this had happened last week for example, we may not have been able to parade for Remembrance Sunday."

CCTV has been posted online. Call 101 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Christmas fun at shopping centre

FESTIVE treats are coming to New Square Shopping Centre. The West Bromwich centre will receive a visit from Santa, giant size Christmas penguins and Disney's Elsa.

Children will be invited to visit the magical Santa's Grotto. Entry is £5 which includes a gift.

The entry fee includes a donation to Sandwell Hospital Children's Ward.

On December 3 the centre will welcome giant-sized animatronic penguins. And on December 10 and 11, Elsa and Olaf will be paying a visit, with photo opportunities available.

Innovation award for manufacturer

A WEDNESBURY manufacturer has won regional recognition at the EEF Future Manufacturing Awards.

ZF Lemforder, which employs 343 staff, was runner-up for the Innovation Award.

It was selected by a panel of judges drawn from business leaders, industry experts and academics.

Tim Kibble, site manager at ZF Lemforder, in Heath Road, said: "This achievement is testament to our hard working and dedicated team, and we are delighted to have been recognised in this way."

Santa to visit fair at registry office

STAFF at Sandwell Register Office are getting into the festive spirit with a craft and food fair this weekend. The register office, in High Street, West Bromwich, is holding its Christmas fair on Sunday, from 10am to 3pm.

Children can have their photograph taken with Father Christmas and get a present for £10. Places to visit Santa must be booked via email at Registrars_WestBromwich

Stalls will be selling crafts, food and festive gifts and chance to win a wedding ceremony at the register office.

Latest speaker to address Institute

BRIAN Draper MBE addresses West Bromwich Institute next week with a talk entitled 'What Is A River?'

The illustrated talk takes place at Central Library, West Bromwich, from 7.30pm on Tuesday, November 29.

Tickets are priced £3, which can be bought on the night. Access to the building can be made via the rear entrance.

Driver's bail extended

A DRIVER who was arrested in connection with the death of a teenager in Great Barr has had his bail extended. Charlie Heywood, 19, died in the early hours on June 5 after he was hit by a car on Birmingham Road, near Barrhill Close. The driver, also aged19, has been rebailed until De-

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

TAKE a large pinch of salt with this week's news that dementia has become the biggest cause of deaths in the UK. It is only the biggest if you split all the cancer deaths into separate forms of cancer. If you total them up, as most people do when referring to the Big C, then cancer is still more likely to kill you than dementia.

MARK Woods took his sick old dog Walnut for one final walk on the beach at Newquay before taking him to the vet to be put down. Mark, whose 18-year-old whippet was paralysed after a series of strokes, says he was amazed that hundreds of people and their dogs responded to his Facebook message and took part in this last act. He should not be so surprised. The bond between man and dog goes back thousands of years and there is no partnership quite like it between any other species on this planet. It began with us feeding them and them helping with our hunting. It evolved into the deepest affection. I know an old man whose beloved labrador died four years ago. Every night as he goes upstairs to bed he still says "Good night, Charlie" to the dog he shared his life with.

AS police launch a crackdown on drivers using mobile phones, here's something to watch out for. Have you noticed how many white vans have driver-side windows which are much dirtier than the rest of the vehicle? How long do you have to leave the window unwashed before it gets so opaque that nobody can see you using your mobile?

SCIENTISTS in Switzerland warn that some red squirrels have leprosy and should not be touched. On the other hand, if you slip a leprous squirrel half a denarius, he might tell you his life story. But only if you're a Monty Python fan.

AS a keen observer of wildlife, let me tell you what would happen in a real-life version of the John Lewis Christmas TV advert which shows creatures happily bouncing on a trampoline. The foxes would eat the squirrels. The badgers would eat the hedgehogs. The badgers would then chase the foxes off the trampoline and mark their territory by pooing all over it. The family's boxer dog, smelling the badger dung, would then mark the place by peeing on it. By daybreak the much-awaited Xmas present would look like a cross between an abattoir and a sewage works, and you wouldn't let your kids anywhere near it.

I MAY have discovered the perfect answer to people who ask why I voted for Brexit. I explain that I am very poorly educated and hate foreigners. It seems to work.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Publication aimed at new parents

HEALTH experts in Sandwell have launched an advice magazine aimed at helping expectant parents prepare for the birth of their child.

My Pregnancy covers everything from breastfeeding to safe sleeping, local services and healthy eating.

The publication features advice from local mothers about breastfeeding and their experiences. Healthy Sandwell has produced the free magazine together with help from would-be parents.

Councillor Preet Gill, cabinet member for public health, said: "Sandwell has one of the lowest rates of uptake to breastfeeding nationally.

"We hope that this information from local mothers, alongside the local support available, will encourage more women to take up breastfeeding. Breastfeeding has long-term benefits that last right into adulthood, and breast milk is perfectly designed for your baby. It is recommended that your baby has nothing but breast milk for the first six months.

"We understand that for some mothers, breastfeeding isn't an option, but we'd like to encourage more women who are able to breastfeed to take this up."

The magazine will be given to parents-to-be at their antenatal appointments. Copies are also available in GP surgeries, children's centres and Sandwell libraries.

The information includes a handy pull-out, which tracks a baby's development in the womb as well as a map of Sandwell a and list of children centres and locations like libraries which host parent and baby sessions.

Investment needed at 'poor' leisure centres

By Richard Guttridge

CRUMBLING swimming pools and leisure centres in the south of Sandwell are badly in need of investment, it has been claimed, following an inspection of the buildings.

Thimblemill Baths in Smethwick and Langley Baths, as well as the Harry Mitchell Leisure Centre and Hadley Stadium in Smethwick, were all rated as 'poor' after an independent consultant was brought in to assess the condition of the buildings.

The findings have led to suggestions that Smethwick and Langley have been left behind compared to other parts of the borough where new leisure centres have been built.

The review concluded that the four centres were in need of 'significant investment'.

Newer facilities such as Portway Leisure Centre in Oldbury, West Bromwich Leisure Centre and Wednesbury Leisure Centre, which was completed last year, were all rated as 'excellent'.

Results

Haden Hill Leisure Centre and Tipton Sports Academy were said to be 'average'. The results of the inspections have come to light in a new council report.

Sandwell Council said the ratings related to the condition of the buildings rather than the quality of services on offer.

Councillor Bob Piper, who represents Smethwick and is also a member of the select committee for health provision, said it was clear investment was needed.

He said: "The difficulty with existing facilities is if they can be made energy efficient. I would love a brand new centre, but it's not a question of what we want it's a question of what is affordable and practical."

In 2012, it was suggested Smethwick leisure centres could be brought together under one roof under a £15 million plan. The scheme never came to fruition but Councillor Piper said it is something which could be looked at again.

Carry on at your convenience

Lahmber Mattu and wife Kashmir celebrate 25 years of running the shop, with customer John Mumford.

A DARLASTON trader is celebrating 25 years of business at his convenience store. Lahmber Mattu, Matt News & Convenience Store in Peacock Road, took on the shop in 1991 – at a time that milk cost 15p a pint, a loaf of bread was 30p and 20 cigarettes cost £1.50.

Mr Mattu took on the store as a newsagents and has developed it into a large convenience store with a DIY section. The 60-year-old, who works with wife Kashmir, 57, and previously employed sons Parvinder, 39, and Lakhy, 37, celebrated the by having a small party with family and friends.

Mr Mattu said: "It has been a lot of hard work and long hours, but I've really enjoyed it. I've never had a day off. I love working with people. I've been here for the full 25 years. I worked at Anslows LTD in Willenhall for 17 years until it closed down. Then six months later we decided we would look for a business and the shop went up for sale.

"When we bought it, it was just a little newspaper shop. We have extended it five times."

He added: "We even open on Christmas Day from 9am until 1pm. Lots of our customers had been asking if we would open because they needed salt or their Christmas dinner was ruined or something else they had forgotten. So we open for a few hours, people come in and we give them a small drink to celebrate."

The Mattus also have a chemists, a chip shop, pizza takeaway, hairdressers and day nursery in the area.

Number of jobless at lowest rate in 10 years

UNEMPLOYMENT in the West Midlands dropped by 22,000 in the three months to September, as nationally the numbers out of work fell to a 10-year low of 1.6 million.

The region's total was down to 151,000 following an increase in recent months and the number of people in work has risen by 72,000 over the quarter, to 2.7 million.

Nationally numbers out of work fell by 37,000 with the unemployment rate falling to 4.8 per cent with employment remaining at a record rate of 74.5 per cent with 31.8 million now in work. Wages grew by 2.3 per cent and there are more than 750,000 vacancies at any one time.

Claimant count figures for the West Midlands however were up 240 last month to 83,555 – 2.3 per cent of the working population.

In Sandwell the numbers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and other unemployment benefits rose 100 to 7,225 (3.6 per cent) with Walsall up 45 to 4,950 (2.9 per cent).

Employment Minister, Damian Hinds, said: "It's good news in the West Midlands where there's a record 2.73 million people in work, a rise of over 100,000 in the last year alone."

JobCentre Plus Black Country spokeswoman Sue Blewitt said some of the improvement in figures for the area was down to seasonal temporary jobs.

"The Royal Mail is recruiting 200 in Wolverhampton alone and Argos and other big retailers are recruiting for Christmas."

Borough's best on new website

A BRAND new website that showcases the very best Sandwell has to offer has been launched.

Discover Sandwell, launched by Sandwell Council, is full of information about living, working, enjoying and exploring the borough.

The website includes details about great places to visit, to shop and to socialise. It also has a special What's On page with lists of events taking place throughout the year.

Health and leisure activities have dedicated pages, along with useful information on education or starting up a business.

An interactive calendar featuring an extensive list of all the events, fairs and much more is also available to browse on the site.

Visit www.discoversandwell.co.uk.

Santas in the running to up charity coffers

HUNDREDS of Santas are to put their best foot forward as part of an unusual charity run.

The Santa Run is on December 4 at West Park, Wolverhampton. It is being held to raise money for the Beacon Centre for the Blind and RNIB.

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Teenager is suspected of role in £1m card fraud

A TEENAGER has been arrested in Great Barr on suspicion of being part of a cross-continental £1-million card fraud gang.

Officers from the West Midlands Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) swooped on the home last Wednesday alongside simultaneous raids in Finland, Spain and Canada.

An 18-year-old male was arrested on suspicion of fraud and cybercrime offences and was bailed until a date in January. It is alleged websites have been compromised and accounts taken over.

It is claimed details have been harvested from more than 6,000 credit cards which have been used to attack some 170 e-merchants. It is believed the stolen card details have been used to carry out transactions topping £1-million before being sold on to other crime networks.

In total, 15 people were arrested. A 15-year-old male and 16-year-old male were also spoken to. Detective Inspector Rob Harris, from ROCU, said: "This is a wide-reaching investigation involving Europol, authorities on the continent, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

"We've played our part by executing warrants at addresses in the West Midlands suspected of being linked to the card scam investigation and cybercrime offences that's seen websites compromised and accounts taken over. Computer equipment and other digital devices have been seized from the properties and these will be forensically examined."

Nursery bid is lodged at pub

NINE jobs could be created if a Tipton pub is converted into a children's day nursery.

The change of use application to the Comedian pub on New Road, has been submitted to Sandwell Council planners by Kangaroo Pouch Ltd, who already run nurseries in Charlemont, Tividale and Hateley.

The pub is not currently trading, and the planned work includes resurfacing the pot-holed car park, and increasing its capacity from 13 to 15 spaces. An external section of the site will also be used to create an outdoor play area, in addition to the nursery provision inside the building.

If approved the nursery would be open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Water pipe work on busy main road

WATER pipe repairs are being carried out on one of the busiest roads out of Wolverhampton.

Lane restrictions are in place on Penn Road southbound between 9.30am and 3.30pm.

Firm on move to £10m new home

Tentec in West Bromwich

A SPECIALIST bolt engineering firm, born in West Bromwich nearly three decades ago, is the latest company to head for a £10 million new home on the i54 site in South Staffordshire.

It comes after Willenhall locks firm ERA announced it was to move to the i54 site occupied by the likes of Jaguar Land Rover, aerospace firm Moog and stamp printers ISP. Both firms are taking their workforce with them.

A 46,000 sq ft state-of-the-art factory unit will be built to provide production and office space for Tentec and its 80 staff. It follows a deal agreed with Tentec's parent company, the Swedish engineering group Atlas Copco. Tentec says it expects more job sas the operation expands.

Halesowen-based property company Mucklow Group will be developing the property on behalf of Atlas Copco and Tentec, with a collective investment of more than £10 million.

Tentec was formed nearly 30 years ago and currently operates from Guns Lane, West Bromwich. Its equipment is used on industrial sites, wind turbines and offshore oil rigs, as well as deep sea operations. It has also worked on the redevelopment of the Tate Modern gallery and helped build the world's tallest flagpole, the 560ft Jeddah Flagpole in Saudi Arabia. It was bought by Atlas Copco in 2013.

An Atlas Copco statement said: "As part of its commitment to grow Tentec's manufacturing leadership, the Atlas Copco group is supporting investment in the construction and fit-out of a new larger facility at i54."

Councillor John Reynolds, Wolverhampton Council's head of economy, said it was a double boost following the deal agreed by ERA.

Open verdict on baby found dead by mother

A 'THRIVING' nine-month-old baby was found lifeless by her mother after suffering what doctors believe to have been a cot death, an inquest heard.

Hameeda Arab was placed in the middle of a double bed at her grandmother's house by her mother, Vinnece Shaker.

But when Mrs Shaker went to check on her baby she found her lying on her side with vomit around her mouth and blood coming from her nose. Mrs Shaker – and paramedics – tried in vain to resuscitate Hameeda.

Black Country coroner, Zafar Siddique, recorded an 'open' conclusion at the inquest held in Oldbury.

The hearing heard how Mrs Shaker had spent September 9 shopping with her mother and Hameeda. They returned to Hameeda's grandmother's home in Vicarage Street, Oldbury, where she was fed and put in bed.

Trained

Mrs Shaker told the inquest she twice went to check on her daughter and found she was fine. But when she went to check a third time she was 'lifeless'.

Mrs Shaker, said: "She was on her side. I put her back on her back and that is when I found she was lifeless. Something was telling me I wanted to go and check on her. Her arms just dropped and I knew then."

Mrs Shaker, of Embassy Road, Oldbury, said she attempted to resuscitate Hameeda having been trained in mouth-to-mouth.

She added: "I picked her up and then my mom really panicked. I tapped her on her back and a little bit of vomit came up.

"Mom put water in her face too to see if that would make her respond." Mrs Shaker's mother rang for an ambulance, which arrived within three minutes.

Attempts to resuscitate Hameeda continued at Sandwell Hospital but could not prevent her death.

Dr Andre Coetzee, who performed the post-mortem examination, said he found nothing unusual except for a small amount of food in her lungs. He concluded on the balance of probabilities Hameeda died of sudden infant death syndrome.

Mr Siddique, said:Having considered the evidence carefully this was a sudden and unexpected death and I leave it as an open conclusion."

Jordanne serves up festive treat

Wheelchair tennis player Jordanne Whiley flicks the festive switch at the Cornbow Shopping Centre

THOUSANDS of people turned out to see Paralympian Jordanne Whiley switch on the festive lights in her home town of Halesowen.

The wheelchair tennis champion said she was thrilled to carry out the honour for the first time.

"This is special for me because I love Christmas and I love being home," she told the massed ranks, before flicking the switch to the sounds of Slade's Merry Xmas Everybody and wild cheering from the crowd. Fairground rides, a Yuletide craft and food market, visit from Santa and live entertainment all day from Black Country Radio put the hordes in a holiday mood. Also milling with the crowd were stilt walkers, fire eaters and a towering nine foot Christmas Party Robot.

Team GB's Jordanne, aged 24, spoke about her determination to make it to the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 after a disappointing Rio Games saw her finish with a bronze medal after suffering a wrist injury. After a tournament next week she plans to spend six weeks of complete rest at home but will be taking over the kitchen on Christmas Day to cook for her family and boyfriend.

"I do the cooking," she said. "It will be a traditional turkey and all the trimmings. I love spending time at home, especially at Christmas."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Asda contributes pies for concert

ASDA has donated 300 mince pies for the Sandwell mayor's Christmas carol concert.

The Great Bridge store's donation will help raise money for Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children and Cares Sandwell. The mayor, Councillor Julie Webb, will receive the mince pies on Wednesday. Councillor Webb said: "I want to say a big thank you to Asda."

The concert takes place on Saturday, December 3 at 7pm. Tickets are £2 on 0121 569 3041 or email mayors_parlour@sandwell.gov.uk

New BBC drama by Blinders creator

A NEW 19th Century television drama by Peaky Blinders creator Steven Knight is to be aired in January, the BBC has announced.

Taboo will see Tom Hardy star as an adventurer who uncovers a dark family conspiracy upon returning home from Africa with the aim of avenging his father's death.

It has been created by Knight, Hardy and Hardy's father Chips Hardy.

The first episode will premiere on January 7, three days before it is shown in the United States.

Concerns raised over exclusions

COUNCIL bosses have raised concerns about the number of exclusions at Sandwell academies.

The authority revealed it had contacted the Department for Education's regional schools commissioner after 105 pupils were permanently excluded from academies over the last two years.

Academies are independent of local authority control, meaning council bosses are unable to take direct action over what happens at the sites.

Teenage pregnancy rate same as in 1920s

TORIES in Wolverhampton have hailed new figures suggesting that teenage pregnancies have fallen to their lowest levels in decades.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show the frequency of teenage pregnancy is comparable with levels in women born in the early 1920s.

Councillor Udey Singh, vice-chairman of Wolverhampton council's children, young people and families scrutiny panel, said a mixture of education and better family planning advice was having a positive effect.

It's hotel party time

CHILDREN are invited to get into the festive spirit and join in a special Christmas party. It takes place on December 4 at Mercure Goldthorn Hotel Wolverhampton, Penn Road, Wolverhampton from midday to 3pm. There will be a disco and party games.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Now spend on helping pub bomb families

THE Iraqi Historic Allegations team was set up at a cost of £57 million to investigate claims that British troops had abused Iraqi prisoners. It is thought that virtually all of the cases it has been called to investigate will be thrown out during the next few months.

The Al-Sweady inquiry, which cost £25 million, was set up to investigate allegations of torture and murder by British troops in Iraq. After five years it found the torture and murder allegations were "wholly without foundation and entirely the product of deliberate lies, reckless speculation and ingrained hostility".

Meanwhile, the families of those killed in the Birmingham pub bombings, 42 years ago this week, have been granted only partial legal aid in their fight to establish how their loved ones died. And more than four decades on, it seems we are no nearer to seeing their killers brought to justice.

This week, Birmingham Council granted the 21 victims the freedom of the city. It is a nice gesture, but they will never be able to enjoy the freedom that those who planted the bombs are still presumably enjoying to this day.

Isn't it rather sad that we seem to be much hotter at investigating those who seek to protect our country than we are towards those who seek to destroy it.

❒❒❒

A BOOKIE last week pointed out that a £5 accumulator on Leicester City winning the Premier League, Britain voting for Brexit and Donald Trump becoming US President would have netted a hypothetical punter a cool £15 million.

I wonder how much you would get if you then went on to bet on a general election next year, Jeremy Corbyn becoming prime minister, and Wolves and Aston Villa both getting promoted? OK, sometimes you need to quit while you're ahead.

❒❒❒

HERE we go again. According to those renowned social commentators at Bisto, Wolverhampton is the least friendly city in the UK. The subsidiary of the Premier Foods conglomerate says that just 32 per cent of Wulfrunians have a neighbour they could call for help if they lost their key, and just 16 per cent engage in social activities in their neighbourhood. With a sample size of just 4,000 across the UK, and small margins of difference between the supposedly friendliest and least friendly cities, it seems hard to justify such sweeping generalisations.

And then we get to the crux of the matter. Only 10 per cent invited a neighbour to their home for a meal in the past year.

Really? But I bet when they did they made them real gravy.

Animal lover Angela with Skippy settled nicely in a hammock

Angela with a tiger cub

Follow the leader – Angela Potter with a baby wallaby

Safari, so good after four decades at park

For Angela, the head of wildlife operations, it is more than just a job, it is a way of life, as SUE SMITH finds out

A YOUNG woman who took on a temporary summer job at West Midland Safari Park now holds one of the top roles at the attraction nearly 40 years later.

Ensuring the animals are ready to face the challenges of the harsh winter months is the job of Angela Potter, the head of wildlife operations and she will be joining the Talking Point team for our sister daily the Express & Star.

Angela has actually lived on the park site for 25 years and can be the first to be called out if there are any problems.

Dedicated

She arrived for a six-week summer job in the Pets Corner area in 1979 and decided to stay and not return to agricultural college.

Since then she has been a keeper in the reserves and gone up the ranks to become head keeper, responsible for the hoof stock, and about two years ago took over as head of wildlife operations from Bob Lawrence, who recently retired.

Angela's whole life is dedicated to animals and at home she keeps goats, a cockatoo, dogs and hens. She said: "I joined the park in Pets Corner and never left and I suppose I felt that I had found my forte.

"Every day is different and all the time I have been here there has never been a day when I did not want to go to work. I still get excited about the animals and their antics.

"It's more than a job, it's a way of life," she added.

"During my time at the park I have hand-reared many animals and kept wallabies in pouches which I carried around with me.

"But my favourites are the giraffes because I have worked very closely with them.

"I also believe that the animals definitely know the keepers and their green uniforms. We are definitely regarded as part of their families."

"Although I left agricultural college to stay on at the park I do believe it is important to study and gain a scientific background to get to the top."

She has taken her own advice and gone on to study for an Open University science degree, a Zoo Animal Management course and a degree in zoo resource management.

Angela's 19-year-old daughter, Shannon, seems to be following the same route and works in the cashier's office at the park while currently studying for an Open University course.

Angela said: "At the moment we are expecting to be busy with the Santa Safari and I am looking forward to keeping readers up-to-date with what is happening at the park."

Up close and personal – Angela and Wally, a wallaby joey at the safari park

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Our choice should now be upheld by the politicians

AN open letter to all UK politicians: Whilst watching the BBC Parliament address from the Rt Hon David Davies and the questions it raised on the EU Referendum and Article 50, it is obvious from the questions by some that you either do not listen to what is being said or that you are doing your very best to delay the process.

Parliament voted 6-1 in favour of granting a referendum on the EU, to the people of the UK. Remain or Leave were the choices given. It was stated that this would be a UK as a whole result, not a region by region one, regardless of any mandates to any devolved Governments or parties.

The Government leaflet stated that it was our choice and that Government would implement it. You gave us the choice and 17.4m of us chose leave. Your views as to whether this decision was right or wrong are now irrelevant.

Please allow the Government to carry out our wishes and vote in favour of Article 50, the notification process to the EU informing them that the UK wishes to leave the organisation.

S STEATHAM
Darlaston

Can't wait for the next show

I WOULD just like to say what a very enjoyable evening I had at the Oldbury Rep in Langley this week.

The production was Jekyll & Hyde the cast was one of the best I had seen.

The director Paul Seventon Marks also took the part of Mr Hyde and he was excellent.

This was theatre at its best, can't wait for their next production. Well done to all involved.

GAYLE ROBERTS
Oldbury

Equality is key with boundaries

MANY of your readers will be familiar with the Boundary Commission's proposals to equalise constituencies and reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600.

But they may not be aware of the benefits that will come from the Government's manifesto commitment to ensure every constituency is equal.

The size of constituencies determines how many people vote for an MP to represent them. Different sized constituencies mean that each person's vote holds different weight. The current boundaries are drawn up on data that is hugely out of date. Equal constituencies mean each MP would be voted for by the same number of people, so everyone's voice in Parliament is equal. The changes would also see us save £66m over the course of a Parliament.

CHRIS SKIDMORE
Minister for the Constitution

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Sandwell Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

What's the solution to prison problems?

WE have a growing prison population and a shrinking staff compliment, so with this toxic cocktail it's little wonder that the authorities are losing control. But what is the solution? It certainly isn't locking more people up or building more prisons and when you look at the numbers of foreign prisoners, you really have to wonder what on earth is going on, and how much of the staffing problems are down to the privatisation of many prisons, where profit is certainly more important than the inmates.

With Victorian buildings overcrowding, staff shortages, drugs, violence, and it seems a complete lack of government leadership, the whole prison experience must be a nightmare for staff and inmate. You have to wonder when this cauldron of fermenting anger is going to explode into open prison revolt, and then you have to ask what are the contingency plans for a full scale prison riot, and possible mass escapes?

S T VAUGHAN
Yardley Wood

Deterrent to phone use at the wheel

LIKE many people I have seen car drivers using mobile phones whilst driving and paying more attention to the phone than their driving.

Police efforts to curb this has failed.

The Government is weak on punishment and the drivers do not care that they are potentially putting lives at risk. Too many times have we read about the tragic consequences of these stupid people.

It's about time the law abiding citizens in this country are protected from these people.

So instead of points on their licence and meaningless fines I suggest a mandatory jail sentence of two years be imposed on offenders.

I think if this was imposed you may see a reduction in phone usage and a reduction in tragic incidents.

JOHN GREEN
Tipton

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God appears to two! Come hear more...

On the 30th November 1987, Jesus Christ appeared to a young medical doctor, now a Consultant Physician in the West Midlands. That experience changed his life.

On the 29th January 2016, Jesus Christ appeared to a 69-year-old man in Walsall- his life has been totally changed. Planet Ministries invites you to hear their story. This will open the door for you to the biggest experience of your life.

You may ask why? Almighty God of Jesus Christ is not a respecter of persons, the experience He gave to them, He wants to give that experience to you too.

His word says: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

Dr Max Matonhodze- an apostle (special messenger) of Jesus Christ

Born in Zimbabwe, came to know Jesus Christ as an undergraduate in August 1980. On the 30th November 1987, he entered his bedroom just after midnight and what he saw was a large ball of bright, incandescent, dazzling light. As the light deemed, Jesus Christ stood at the centre of the light and gave him a special message for every person including you.

Dr Max came to the United Kingdom on divine instruction in December 1993 and trained to be a Respiratory Medicine Specialist and has held a post as a Consultant Physician for the past 14 years. He has a message for you from God **"Almighty God is inviting you to live in His presence."** This message will change your life. Jesus Christ wants to touch your spirit, soul and your body. Dr Max and his wife Joyce invite you

John Tidesley (Not real name as we need to protect his identity)

69 years from Walsall, West Midlands. Troubled with leg weakness due to Multiple Sclerosis, epilepsy, COPD. Under various medical specialists his condition deteriorated and needed to use a wheelchair and oxygen from a cylinder to help him breathe.

On the 29th January 2016, following an epileptic seizure at about 2 am, at the end of his tether and on the verge of taking his own life, he reached out to his phone, to send a farewell message to his wife. At that moment a text message sent from Planet Ministries flushed on his phone!

"Jesus Christ is the light of the world, he who walks with him will never walk in darkness."

As he read that message, his whole room lit up with a bright light at the centre of which was the figure of a man. He was shown the heavenly city and then a full video of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Following this encounter, John lives without a wheelchair or oxygen. Totally transformed. He is now going up and down the country teaching people to believe in God. He wants you to hear from him. It will change your life.

What you need to do now?

Reserve a place at the Christmas Convention http://planetministries.org.uk/events

Admission is FREE of charge and dress code is smart casual. The Venue is:

St John's Church, St John's Road, Kateshill, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 7JT

Dates and time:

Friday 16th December 7 - 9pm
Saturday 17th December 2 - 5pm
Saturday 17th December 7 - 9pm
Sunday 18th December 10:30 -2pm

Preview the audio of John Tidesley's story at http://planetministries.org.uk/message/testimony

Planet Ministries

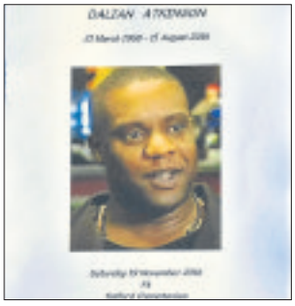
Christmas Convention
16th to 18th December 2016
Register online: http://planetministries.org.uk/events Life changing event

A floral tribute in the claret and blue colours of Aston Villa

Mourners gather at Telford Crematorium for the former football star's funeral

The funeral car is led in to the grounds of the crematorium for the service

Former Aston Villa manager Brian Little was among the mourners



The order of service for the funeral of ex-Aston Villa player Atkinson

Ex-Villa ace laid to rest

A CHARISMATIC soul who enriched everyone's lives with intellect, insight and warmth – one of the tributes paid to former footballer Dalian Atkinson as he was laid to rest.

Hundreds of fans, former football stars, friends and family gathered at Telford Crematorium for the ex-striker's funeral.

The 48-year-old died after police were called to the street where he grew up, Meadow Close in Trench, Telford, early on August 15. He became unresponsive after being shot with a Taser.

The ex-Villa striker, who had also played for Ipswich Town, Sheffield Wednesday and Manchester City, died despite the efforts of hospital doctors who battled to save him.

During his humanist service, tributes were read aloud. Niece Cleo said: "You always exuded such a strong beautiful presence. You were a magnet to people who couldn't help but be drawn to you and like you. You had such a charismatic soul and enriched everyone's lives with your intellect, insight and warmth, never failing to make people around you laugh."

Ugo Ehiogu, Ian Taylor, Steve Staunton, Gary Charles, Ken McNaught, Gordan Cowans and Tommy Johnson were among the former Villa players at the service. Ehiogu said: "He was someone who was very kind to his friends, loved football, loved life and wanted to enjoy life. He was a very understanding man. He always had time for you."

Former Villa boss Brian Little said: "The memories I'd like to remember are those of watching Dalian play, especially under Ron Atkinson where he had a fantastic spell at Villa."

Fan Anthony Hackett, 32, of Walsall, said: "Dalian was a childhood hero of mine."

The death of Mr Atkinson, who lived in Little Dawley, is being investigated by the IPCC.

Former Villa captain Gordon Cowans at the funeral of Dalian Atkinson

Book on old boys killed in war goes to museum

A BOOK to commemorate former Holly Lodge Grammar School pupils who died in the Second World War has been donated to Smethwick Heritage Centre.

The school for boys, now known as Holly Lodge College, donated the book to the museum, located at Victoria Park Lodge on High Street, where it will be kept in a special glass case forever.

The book features 42 brave men – who had all attended the school – that around the age of 21 and 22 were killed in conflict, leaving behind their wives and children. The 42 men in the book left the school but were subsequently killed.

The book features a picture of the men on one half of the page with a description about their honours and how they were killed on the opposite page.

For years the book was kept outside the headmaster's office in a glass case with a page turned each day.

Preserved

Ex-pupil Trevor Lee, who is married to the chairman of the heritage centre, said: "It's the ideal place for the book as it's going to preserved forever and this is what the museum is for.

"We're going to have a copy of the book made so anyone that wants to attend the museum can physically turn the pages and the book itself can be kept in a safe place.

"It was particularly appropriate to receive the book as it was Remembrance Sunday and the book exhibition was on the Saturday afternoon."

Trevor is part of the Old Boys Association, which former pupils from Holly Lodge Grammar School can join. The association meets once a year for an annual dinner with around 300 men making up the association.

Old boy Gary Baines, left, with Mary and Trevor Lee

Poor food hygiene revealed

ALMOST one in 10 eating establishments in Sandwell have poor hygiene standards, new figures have revealed.

Nine per cent of restaurants and takeaways have been ordered to improve.

Businesses are rated out of five in terms of hygiene. Six currently have the lowest possible rating of zero.

These establishments are told they require urgent improvement and are normally inspected again within a short time period. A total of 81 businesses have one-star and are in need of major improvement, while another 81 have been told they need to improve after being given two out of five.

The vast majority of food businesses in the borough run clean and safe operations. Figures showed 834 were rated 'very good' and had been given a rating of five.

Some 401 are rated 'good', which carries a rating of four, while 479 are 'generally satisfactory' and have a rating of three.

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Homeless thug who beat friend to death jailed for life

A HOMELESS thug bludgeoned to death a friend who had given him a place to sleep and has been jailed for life. Darren Lander must serve 15 years and five months before being considered for parole.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard Lander savagely attacked 32-year-old Richard Groves shortly after starting to stay at the flat at Alfred Gunn House in Thompson Road, Langley. The 28-year old hit the victim around 40 times with a large rock and a piece of broken furniture following a row.

Mr Groves' neck and skull was fractured in several places and his ribs were broken when he raised his arms in vain to protect himself, said Mr Michael Duck, prosecuting.

Lander, who gave the flat where the murder took place as his home address but was of no fixed abode, pleaded guilty to murder. The court heard the 12 minutes of violence erupted after the two men returned to the flat together on the evening of May 16.

Details

Police are still unsure of the exact motive, but the beating could have been triggered by Lander's unfounded belief that Mr Groves had taken money from his aunt.

The defendant admitted murder but claimed to be able to remember little of the details of the assault because he suffered a 'blackout'.

But he made no effort to get assistance as the man lay dying in the bedroom. In fact he continued to use the flat for the next two days before finally ringing a policeman he knew to confess.

Lander was arrested from outside the home of a relative in Halesowen. Mr Richard Carey-Hughes QC, defending, said: "Instead of immediately contacting the authorities he wandered around screwing-up his courage to turn himself in.".

MP in support of protecting shopworkers

WARLEY MP John Spellar has backed a campaign to protect shopworkers from abuse and violence at the start of the Christmas shopping rush.

He is supporting union Usdaw, which has spoken to shoppers and retail staff about incidents of verbal abuse, threats and violent attacks as part of its Freedom from Fear campaign.

Mr Spellar said: "I pledge my wholehearted support to this vital campaign by Usdaw to protect shopworkers from violence, threats and abuse. It showcases the very best of what trade unions do for working people."

Usdaw General Secretary John Hannett, said: "Every minute of every day a shopworker is threatened, assaulted or verbally abused. No-one should have to put up with violence or abuse at work. This is an opportunity for our members to talk to the public about abuse at work and to ask customers to keep their cool and show respect for shopworkers."

Fresh footage in hunt to find killer

Police footage of David Weaver, circled, among a crowd of people at the Hare & Hounds before fighting led to his death

NEW footage showing the last moments of a father who died five months after a pub brawl has been released by cold case detectives, to mark the eighth anniversary of his murder.

Father-of-one David Weaver was at a memorial for a family member when a fight broke out and spilled onto the street. The images show Mr Weaver among a crowd of people, before he went outside.

He was later found collapsed in the street with severe head injures. He was in hospital for five months before he died, aged 45. Police say there were 200 people at the Hare & Hounds on Marsh Hill, Erdington, when trouble flared back in 2008.

They say people knew who was responsible but didn't have the confidence to come forward and so no one has ever been brought to justice.

Det Supt Nick Walton said: "We faced a great reluctance from members of the public at the event that night to tell us what had happened. Although we took a large number of statements and made two arrests, we were not able to find David's killer. We are hoping that now, eight years on, people have moved on in their lives and maybe there was something they were not able to reveal back then, but might be able to tell us now. "

Police revealed Mr Weaver's mother died two years ago without knowing who killed her son. His four sisters and brother are also appealing for help to catch the killer.

Contact DC Allan Jones in the Cold Case Review Team on 101 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Trust unveils new strategy on wildlife

A NEW strategy to protect and encourage animals, insects and plants in the Black Country and Birmingham has been launched.

The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country chose Sandwell Valley Country Park to unveil Our Vision for a Greener Future.

The strategy, outlined by chairman Peter Shirley, covers the years from 2017-22 and sets out the need to protect 131 threatened species in the area, including great crested newts, water voles, white-clawed crayfish, black redstart and native bluebell, and 22 threatened habitats.

A key plank of the strategy is in investing in developing trust staff and volunteers to improve their skills and create the environmental leaders of the future.

The trust will also work towards being financially sustainable and independent to reduce its reliance on grant funding and will seek a new base that will also be a home for wildlife where people can experience and connect with nature,

The trust will also work with other trusts in the region and nationally.

It aims to protect spaces for wildlife and manage them to high standards.

One project will involve connecting wild spaces with wildlife corridors and creating new 'stepping stone' corridors.

Top Tiptonians are sought in contest

THE search is on for the most helpful people in Tipton. Organisers of The Pride of Tipton awards want to hear about unsung heroes who go the extra mile to help the community.

They are looking for people who do charity work, get involved with local sports clubs or help their neighbours.

People can nominate an individual or a group. Nominations have to be in by February 24, call 0121 556 1351 or email pot@rsaacademy.org

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Baby William arrives in a blaze of glory at roadside

LITTLE William Blaze had an unexpected start in life – after being born on the roadside. Sarah Blaze and her husband Stuart were forced to pull over on the A454 Bridgnorth Road.

The couple had driving from their home in Bridgnorth to get to Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital after Sarah's waters broke. But they only got as far as Rudge Heath before Sarah screamed that the baby was coming and wanted to push.

It took just a few minutes for William to make his way into the world after his parents were told to pull to the kerbside and start delivery when they called for an ambulance.

Ironically, Sarah works as an incident command desk supervisor for West Midlands Ambulance Service.

She said: "We got about halfway to New Cross, driving down the Bridgnorth Road to Wolverhampton, and I said I wanted to push. It took about three or four pushes and his head was out. I was still in the passenger seat and my husband hadn't had time to get out of the driver's seat.

"I just want to thank the call handler, the people at Bridgnorth Maternity Unit and the ambulance crews who helped us.

Resting

"The call handler was talking me through everything we needed to do. They were absolutely brilliant. It only took two to three minutes."

Sarah, who also has a four-year-old son called Thomas, spent some time resting at Bridgnorth Maternity Unit.

The youngster, who weighed 8lbs 2oz when he was born, is now settling into his new home.

Sarah and Stuart Blaze with little William who was born on the A454

Foodbank marks 10 years of help

A FOODBANK in Wolverhampton is celebrating 10 years of providing a vital service to the city's needy with a thanksgiving service.

More than 150 people representing volunteers, supporters and partners were expected to gather at Nations Christian Centre in Temple Street to mark the milestone.

The food bank, based at The Well, has supplied more than 300 tons of food and toiletries since it was set up in 2006.

Project leaders Gary and Caroline Price said: "We have been humbled by the willingness of so many people to help the individuals and the families that find themselves in desperate circumstances," said Mr Price.

"From day one it has been a journey of real faith and although it is sad to see so many in need, it has been a blessing to see them provided for."

Unlike most other foodbanks, The Well does not operate as a food collection service but delivers pre-prepared food parcels direct to those in need. Donations have come from over 750 sources across the city and beyond.

Jobless in the region now down by 22,000

UNEMPLOYMENT in the West Midlands dropped by 22,000 in the three months to September. Nationally the numbers out of work fell to a 10-year-low of 1.6 million.

The region's total was down to 151,000 following an increase in recent months and the number of people in work has risen by 72,000 over the quarter, to 2.7 million. Nationally numbers out of work fell by 37,000 with the unemployment rate falling to 4.8 per cent with employment remaining at a record rate of 74.5 per cent with 31.8 million now in work. Wages grew by 2.3 per cent and there are more than 750,000 vacancies at any one time.

By John Corser

Claimant count figures for the West Midlands however were up 240 last month to 83,555 – 2.3 per cent of the working population.

Seasonal

In Sandwell the numbers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and other unemployment benefits rose 100 to 7,225 (3.6 per cent) with Walsall up 45 to 4,950 (2.9 per cent).

The claimants total in Wolverhampton was flat at 6,735 (4.2 per cent) and in Dudley it was down 30 at 5,645 (2.9 per cent).

Cannock Chase saw a fall of 25 to 725 (1.2 per cent), Lichfield was down 15 at 440 (0.7 per cent) with South Staffordshire flat at 720 (1.1 per cent) and Stafford up by five to 670 (0.8 per cent).

Wyre Forest, which includes Kidderminster, was up by five to 745 (1.3 per cent).

Employment Minister, Damian Hinds, said: "Yet again we have a strong set of figures, with employment continuing to run at a record high and unemployment falling to a 11-year low. Growth is being fuelled by full-time professional jobs while wages are continuing to perform strongly, which underlines the resilience of the UK labour market.

"It's good news in the West Midlands where there's a record 2.73 million people in work, a rise of over 100,000 in the last year alone.

JobCentre Plus Black Country spokeswoman Sue Blewitt said that some of the improvement in figures for the area was down to seasonal temporary jobs.

"The Royal Mail is recruiting 200 in Wolverhampton alone and Argos and other big retailers are recruiting for Christmas."

A jobs fair at Wolverhampton's Molineux Stadium tomorrow from 9am-1pm will see 19 employers represented,

The number of people in work in the UK is up 461,000 over the past year to just under 32 million.

Ablaze recovery lorry sparks queues

A RECOVERY lorry burst into flames sparking queues up to five miles long on the M6 and M5 near Great Barr. Stunned motorists captured the scene as the lorry, carrying a van on the back, caught fire on Monday afternoon.

The blaze started with the lorry coming to a halt between junction eight for the M5 and junction nine at Wednesbury northbound. Three crews from West Bromwich, Perry Barr and Walsall were called to the scene at 12.24pm.

In total there were 15 firefighters at the scene, two of whom had to wear breathing apparatus to allow them to get close enough to tackle the flames.

The fire was quickly contained before crews worked to ensure the vehicle was safe.

No-one was reported injured as a result of the blaze.

A spokesman for West Midlands Fire Service said: "It was a severe fire in an HGV recovery vehicle. The fire was extinguished and the vehicle made safe."

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Pudsey banks on help as fundraisers pitch in

FUNDRAISERS from across the Black Country put on their thinking caps to raise money for Children in Need.

Schools, offices, hospitals and many more places have been raising money for the charity in a variety of different ways from dressing up, cleaning cars to hosting raffles.

Children in Need currently funds 137 projects across the West Midlands with funding of more than £7.2m hard at work in the region. Pupils from across the West Midlands were broadcast live on BBC One for their live performance of Billy Withers' Lean on Me.

Soaked

The choir were shown live from the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley, with pupils from Kings Heath Primary School, Mansfield Green Primary School, Niksham School, Tiverton School, Water Mill School, Westminster Primary School, Jessons Primary School and Tipton Green Junior School appearing on TV.

Amongst the many hundreds of people donating and fundraising in the West Midlands were staff from Lloyds Banking Group offices in Pendeford, Wolverhampton.

The call centre was full of staff volunteers, including Liam Payne's sister Ruth Gibbins, who took calls for donations. Helpers at the centre worked tirelessly to take as many donations as possible until the early hours.

Cakes were thrown at managers' faces, cake sales filled the office tables and staff toured with Pudsey when visiting local schools and hospitals.

Meanwhile schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and workplaces put their Pudsey ears on and raised money in a variety of other ways.

Lauren Hipkins with cupcakes

Sporting the special wristbands

Colourful dress as staff in Pendeford staff get into the spirit of the occasion

West Midlands Hospital got soaked during their charity car wash at the private hospital grounds, raising more than £200.

Meanwhile Natalie Elson at New Cross Hospital raised more than £250 through competitions, a raffle and by selling beautifully-made Pudsey cupcakes.

Catering staff from University of Wolverhampton dug out their fancy dress to fundraise, dressing as a range of famous icons including Disney's Cruella Deville and Grease's Pink Ladies alongside rows of collection buckets.

The money raised from fundraisers from across the Midlands will help children across the world, including children in the region.

Teenage killer fails in appeal over sentence

TOP judges have ruled that a teenager who was jailed after one man was killed and another left fighting for his life cannot complain about his punishment.

Sadam Khan Essakhil, aged 17, was convicted of the murder of Lukasz Furmanek, 24, and the attempted murder of Radoslaw Dudek, 31.

He was locked up for life and ordered to serve at least 19 years behind bars at Birmingham Crown Court in January. Abdullah Atiqzoy, 18, of Elizabeth Street, Oldbury, was convicted of the same crimes and got life with a minimum 26 years. The victims had spent the night of May 30 last year at a Polish club in Handsworth, London's Appeal Court heard.

Survived

They were walking along Grove Lane in the early hours when they encountered Essakhil and Atiqzoy. 'Within 30 seconds' both were lying on the road with savage knife wounds, said Mr Justice Goss.

Mr Furmanek died at the scene, while Mr Dudek narrowly survived the attack.

The prosecution case was that Essakhil, of Hob Moor Road, Small Heath, and Atiqzoy, acted together as part of a joint enterprise.

Both were armed with a knife and 'intended to attack and kill anyone they met'. They did just that to 'the very first people they encountered on the street that night'.

CCTV footage showed Essakhil delivering a hard kick to Mr Furmanek's head as he lay on the ground dying.

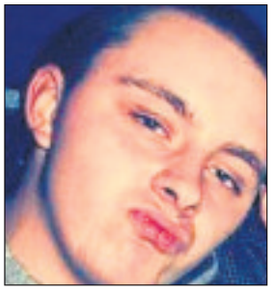
Both killers claimed self-defence but the jury did not believe them.

The judge who jailed the pair said both played a 'full and willing part' in the crimes and neither showed 'any real remorse'. Lawyers for Essakhil argued his minimum jail term should have been lower, given his youth. His barrister said: "Nineteen years is really far too long for him and his circumstances."

But Mr Justice Goss, sitting with Lady Justice Sharp and Mrs Justice Jefford, said: "Although it was a very long sentence for a man of Essakhil's age, it was not in our judgment wrong in principle or manifestly excessive. Accordingly this appeal against sentence is dismissed."

Atiqzoy's brother Feizullah, 25, of Swan Crescent, Oldbury, got a four-year jail term for assisting an offender.

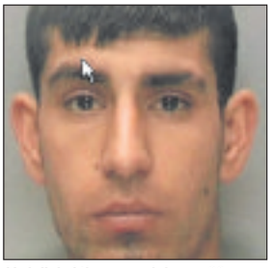
After the trio were sentenced earlier this year police welcomed the life terms handed to Essakhil and Abdullah Atiqzoy.



Victim Lukasz Furmanek

Sadam Essakhil – appeal dismissed

Feizullah Atiqzoy – four year term



Abdullah Atiqzoy – minimum 26 years

Advertisement

WORKS' parties, fairy lights, expectant youngsters writing gift lists, creative school Nativity plays where the wise men are replaced by aliens – it must be Christmas soon.

A time defined by more frenzied family activity than any other celebration on our calendars, stress levels begin to soar from the beginning of November.

But for a special group of people the normal irritating distractions that hinder festivities are magnified. Gift-buying, crowded store check-outs, seemingly ceaseless TV advertising for celebrity-branded perfumes and carols being played in shopping centres all too early, are no more of a problem to them than the rest of us.

For these people, the real 'Ba humbug!' moments are deeply personal – secrets that have been cleverly hidden away for years.

Often feeling foolish at the very thought of a 'confession' they continue every Christmas to stoically endure the celebrations, aching for them to finish soon.

But the truth is, this Christmas could be very different for those countless denture wearers whose teeth are no longer able to function the way they should.

Party food Hell for poor dentures – seeded breads

Ill-fitting dentures and nuts just don't mix

Dry turkey can also be a problem for ill-fitting teeth

Royal icing on Christmas cake – too hard for some

Will it be a difficult denture Christmas?

The heralds of Christmas are all around us – lights, crowds of shoppers and the first flush of works' parties. For most people it all promises to be loads of fun, but for some who wear dentures, the seasonal frivolity is no laughing matter. Principal of the Denture Clinic and North Street Dental and Implant Clinic, STEVEN BURCHELL DipCDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353, offers a timely message of hope

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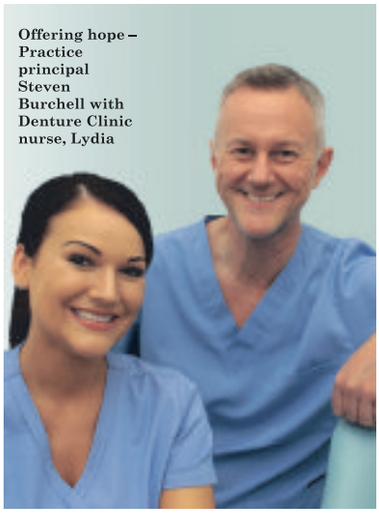

Offering hope – Practice principal Steven Burchell with Denture Clinic nurse, Lydia

Hidden smiles

The natural harmonious fit that should exist between prosthetics and the soft tissues of the mouth is no longer there and the consequence is at best miserable, but regularly life-changing for worse.

How do I know? For nearly 30 years I've been involved in denture provision and have been responsible for helping to resolve some of the worst-case scenarios ever to present to a dentist.

If you have denture issues and are reading this, chances are I've encountered your denture problem many times.

Poor dentures can steal spontaneity – even the natural response to those Christmas joyous moments can be stifled as laughing can be perilous, with the lower prosthetic tilting and slipping. Sadly, laughing can also present an opportunity for the very worst of 'denture moments' when the prosthetic loses all adhesion.

And as for seasonal colds . . . coughing is something that, certainly for some, needs to be done with teeth out. Stifled laughter, smiles hidden behind hands; is this any way to live when an answer can be so close at hand?

There are those too, whose days are strategically planned around the need to replenish dental fixative on their teeth.

Copious supplies are needed, secreted away in handbags, bathrooms, kitchens, cars, pockets, bags and other hiding places.

Just the simple task of eating a Christmas meal can become a hurdle which demands 'must-have' strategies to survive the event.

Do you recognise any of the following?

- **The need for plausible excuses to leave the dining table to reload the dental fixative halfway through a meal**
- **That you must be seated where as few people as possible can see you eating**
- **Have excuses already in mind for missing out on that hard, royal icing Christmas cake, or Christmas pudding infused with brandy . . . and nuts**
- **Ensuring you don't have an extra glass of wine for fear of forgetting those dangerous dentures which seemingly have a mind of their own**
- **Struggling with sore spots and longing for the meal to end soon. Just too much pain**
- **Needing to go home early, just to get your teeth out**
- **Embarrassed by sunken cheeks and pinched lips and looking older than your years because your teeth are orally misplaced**
- **Ashamed by the aesthetics of your dentures which look like they just don't belong to your face**
- **Simply not wanting to join in the celebrations; always having to find a reason to avoid socialising**
- **A life ruled by dentures that just don't work – especially where there's party food**
- **No longer able to enjoy your favourite foods**
- **Restricted diet and generally a poor nutritional intake on a daily basis**

I once heard of a tragic case where a lady in her 80s had lived her whole adult life as a "consummate actress" because of failing false teeth.

She went out only to work, had no social life and rarely spoke to anyone.

She was deeply troubled by her dentures and the issues relating to them eclipsed her life.

A complex clinical case, I was privileged to help transform her life for the better many years ago.

She learned to live again in the latter years, making new friends, going to restaurants and stopping for conversations in the street. Her regret – and mine too – that she just accepted her problem. Afraid of the dentist and fearful her appointment with me would disappoint, she suffered in silence.

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Health chiefs in talks over action on slavery

Former Baggies stars united for documentary screening

Former Albion stars Ally Robertson, Cyrille Regis and John Wile in a question and answer session at the premiere at the Mac Birmingham

ALBION legends reunited as they gathered to watch the first screening of a new documentary looking at a 'Whites vs Blacks' football match from 1979.

The game was set up for Albion player Len Cantello's testimonial with Baggies players Brendon Batson, Cyrille Regis and Laurie Cunningham – the so-called Three Degrees – lining up with Bob Hazell and George Berry of Wolves.

Regis, Ally Robertson and John Wile were among the former players sharing stories, memories and anecdotes of their time at the Hawthorns. Wile said at the time it was 'just another game'.

Vernon Hodgson and Stewart Phillips were also at the showing of Whites Vs Blacks: How Football Changed A Nation at the Mac arts centre in Birmingham.

The documentary has been made by Albion fan and broadcaster Adrian Chiles for the BBC's Black and British season and will be screened on BBC2 on November 27.

In the documentary, Chiles looks at the story of taboos surrounding the game. He uncovers rarely seen footage and reunites players from both teams. Chiles also discovers Hodgson, the so-called Fourth Degree still works in West Bromwich working as a refuse collector.

Geoff Snape, Secretary of WBA Former Players Association, said of the film: "We are proud that West Bromwich Albion was at the forefront of attempting to eradicate the effects of racism in football."

HEALTH chiefs from across the West Midlands have discussed how to improve awareness of modern slavery among medical professionals.

At a conference in Birmingham, a senior delegate warned there was currently a lack of understanding of the issue, particularly in the NHS.

It comes after 12 suspected slaves were rescued by police in Sandwell last month.

Dr Stephen Munday is chairman of the Association of Directors of Public Health West Midlands which represents Directors of Public Health from each council in the region. He said: "There isn't a great deal of awareness and understanding of modern slavery I would say, particularly within the NHS and that is one of the reasons why we are holding this conference.

"More importantly it is about what frontline staff can actually do to both identify and act on the issue.

Practice

"The staff which are best placed are those front-line public sector workers: doctors nurses, social workers, teachers, community health services."

The modern slavery conference was hosted by Public Health England where it was hoped good practice would be shared and further action agreed.

The Home Office estimates there are potentially 13,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK, with 55 per cent being female, while 35 per cent of all victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation, and a third of trafficking victims are children.

Detective Superintendent Nick Walton, West Midlands Police's lead on modern slavery, said he had witnessed an increase in intelligence on modern slavery over the last year. He said: "A lot of work has been done with partners around awareness raising and over the last 12 months we have seen a steady uplift in intelligence about what might be taking place."

Rev Simon Douglas, at Christ the King Church as it celebrates 60th anniversary

Early picture inside the church

One of the first Youth Clubs at the church

Fancy dress day in the 50s

60 years ago – and it began in a steel hut

THE first services were held in a corrugated hut converted into a makeshift church to serve the growing population of part of post-war Wolverhampton.

Six decades on, the congregation of Christ The King Church in Pendeford was due this week to mark the church's diamond anniversary with a celebratory service led by the new Bishop of Lichfield.

Before the steel hut in Macrome Road was commandeered for Sunday services, residents had attended the nearby Church of St Michael's and All Angels in Tettenhall but it was felt that the expanding neighbourhoods of Aldersley and Pendeford needed a place of worship of their own.

A bricks-and-mortar building was eventually built around the corner in Pendeford Avenue, dedicated on October 20, 1956, the

MEMORY LANE

By Marion Brennan

feast day of Christ The King. The date of the feast day moved to November 20, and the main celebration was due to be held on that day.

Reverend Simon Douglas, who came to Christ the King from St Michael's two years ago, following a tradition of curates from the Tettenhall church becoming vicars at the newer one, said everyone was thoroughly enjoying the birthday celebrations.

Clubs

"The hut was a community centre as well as a church, and one of the things it was very strong on was working with young people, and it remains very much a community centre today," he said.

"The local playgroup has met here for 40 years. We also have the Brownies, Girl Guides and Rainbows, keep fit classes, Slimming World club and dance schools. We feel very much part of the community which helps us to keep going and looking outwards."

In old black and white photographs, large groups of youngsters are seen dancing around the maypole, or in musical bands, or dressed up in costume for a drama production.

Among those early clubs were the Anglican Young People's Association and the Church Lads' Brigade which performed at the many youth-centred social events across the community. The new church had a stage area which was used for concerts and plays.

Rev Douglas said that despite smaller congregations, which have fallen even within his relatively short tenure, there was still much to celebrate.

"We do have a very good community engagement in the church, and the building is very well used for many different activities."

May Day was celebrated

First vicar Rev Royston Lord

The marching band pictured in the 50s

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Make sure these needy families don't go hungry

FOR most of us Christmas is a time for giving, eating, and spending time with friends and family.

But there are families in the Black Country and Staffordshire struggling to put a meal on the table every day which can make the festive season seem an even bleaker time of year.

This is why our sister daily the Express & Star has launched the Feed a Family This Christmas Appeal which will provide vital supplies to families in need.

Donations of festive food, such as mince pies, chocolates and Christmas puddings as well as basics such as canned goods, long-life milk, fruit juice, pasta and rice are needed. Also non-food items such as toiletries, new socks and small gifts.

At a drop-off point, from left, Wolverhampton Food Bank Project managers Gary and Caroline Price, Neil Maddox, Midcounties Co-operative Codsall store, and editor Keith Harrison, at the Express & Star

Causes

The good causes being supported are The Well (Home of the Wolverhampton Food Bank), the Good Shepherd Ministry, based in Wolverhampton, the Black Country Food Bank, which has centres across Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, Smethwick Food Bank, Walsall North Food Bank and Cannock and District Food Bank.

The appeal will also be supporting The Haven which provides both support services to women and children who are affected by domestic violence and homelessness.

The campaign has already been backed by Wolves legend Steve Bull and Wolves favourite Mel Eves. Support has also come from Bilston Operatic Company, which staged Our House at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre recently. Donations of food have already started flooding in including support from Lichfield Food Bank which has handed over some of its surplus stock and the 8th Wolverhampton Scout group has given us an array of items leftover from its annual summer camp – hot dogs, spaghetti, cereals, milk and jam. The group has also pledged to hold a separate collection at its group premises over the coming weeks in the hope of donating more items. Businesses are also doing their bit by hosting donation boxes on their premises for workers to drop-off contributions. Inspired Gaming Group in Showell Road, Wolverhampton and Guardian Locks & Engineering in Willenhall are both helping.

*For the full list of items which can be donated visit www.expressandstar.com The drop-off points are at: Express & Star Wolverhampton head office, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES; Express & Star Cannock/Walsall office, Queen Square, Cannock, WS11 1EA; Express & Star Stourbridge office, 3 Market Street, Stourbridge, DY8 1AB; Waitrose Wolverhampton, Penn Road, Wolverhampton, WV2 4NJ; The Co-operative Food, 28-32 Wood Lane/Bakers Way, Codsall, WV8 1DB; The Co-operative Food in High Holborn, Sedgley, DY3 1SS.

With donations are Recce Hancher, Alex Neilson and Taylor Fereday from 8th Wolverhampton Scouts

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View from above at Merry Hill centre

The drone view of Merry Hill from UAV Filming, as the centre gears up for a busy festive season with longer opening

THIS fantastic photograph offers a whole new perspective on the Merry Hill shopping centre and its surrounding area.

The shots were captured by a drone sent up high above Dudley and Brierley Hill by Christopher Homer from UAV Filming.

The scale of the vast shopping complex is clear with rows upon rows of cars parked up outside.

Mr Homer also filmed the neighbouring Waterfront in Brierley Hill.

The amazing aerial photographs are the latest stunning drone shots taken across the Dudley borough.

Meanwhile, Merry Hill bosses intu have announced that opening hours are being extended for Christmas shopping from tomorrow (Friday) as the malls will open until 10pm on weekdays.

The shopping centre will also open until 8pm on Saturdays for shoppers.

Grotto

The shopping centre has also joined forces with toy manufacturer Playmobil to create a unique Christmas grotto experience.

Merry Hill will be offering children the chance to meet some larger than life Playmobil figures alongside Santa himself, finally leaving with a Playmobil gift.

Rob Pickersgill, marketing manager at intu Merry Hill, said: "Thanks to intu's nationwide scale and consumer facing brand, we've been able to team up with one of the world's best known toy manufacturers to make our Christmas grotto a must-visit destinations for families in the West Midlands over the festive season.

"We can't wait for children to see what we have in store."

For more information visit intu.co.uk/MerryHill

Evening to remember comedian Tommy

A SPECIAL club night is to remember the Black Country's beloved comedian Tommy Mundon tonight (Thursday).

The Shenstone Club in Halesowen is putting on a Tommy Mundon Remembered Evening in honour of the comedy legend who was born in the town.

The event which is raising funds for the Mary Stevens Hospice, will start at the Kent Road venue from 7.30pm and will see a line-up of entertainment.

In 2014 the popular comedian passed away at the hospice following a battle against Parkinson's disease.

Earlier this year, a biography written by his long-time friend Angela Daniels was launched to celebrate his life, in association with the Black Country Society and Morgan Solicitors. Proceeds from the book are also going to the Mary Stevens Hospice,

Tickets to the club night cost £5 and must be booked in advance by calling 0121 422 5157.

Raise a glass to toast the Great War heroes

SIX War heroes from the Black Country will be commemorated as part of a project 100 years on from the Battle of the Somme.

History groups nominated three First World War heroes from each of Sandwell's six towns to be put to a public vote.

Half a dozen were chosen and the six chosen heroes will be remembered on specially-designed beer mats to be distributed to pubs across the borough.

The poll was organised by Sandwell Council's libraries and archive service as part of the local commemorations of the Battle of the Somme.

Sacrifices

Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said: "This has been a very worthwhile exercise to mark the dark days of the First World War and those bloody events at the Battle of the Somme.

"It is an imaginative way of reminding us all of the great sacrifices made by people from the six towns of Sandwell.

"The beer mats will start to be distributed in local pubs in the coming weeks so I would urge people who see them to raise their glass to Sandwell's heroes."

The six people selected were Private Albert Barnsley, of Oldbury, Lance Corporal Sidney Taylor, of Rowley Regis, Private Harry Bodfish, of Smethwick, Nurse Tilly Tate, of Tipton, Stoker Frank Malton, of Wednesbury and Private Arnold Slater of West Bromwich.

Private Albert Barnsley

World war nurse Tilly Tate

The heroes with the most votes in each town were: Oldbury – Private Albert Barnsley with 54.72 per cent; Rowley Regis – Lance Corporal Sidney Taylor with 38.57 per cent of the vote; Smethwick – Private Harry Bodfish with 47.17 per cent; Tipton – Nurse Tilly Tate with 67.53 per cent; Wednesbury – Stoker Frank Malton with 48.15 per cent of the vote and West Bromwich – Private Arnold Slater with 36.37 per cent of the vote.

Sandwell's Community History and Archive Service wants any residents with any photographs of the heroes to call 0121 558 2561 or email archives_service@sandwell.gov.uk

Organisers of the project thanked people who voted for their local heroes and history groups for their support.

For a short profile of the six heroes visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/localheroes

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BLACK FRIDAY CRAZY DEALS

Use a lid to trap heat when making soup to save energy and reduce costs

Look up some one-pot macaroni cheese recipes that don't use the oven

Winter warmers that also cut energy costs

By Kate Whiting

WINTER is well and truly on its way – which means we're finally free to forget about 'bikini bodies' and build up a layer of 'insulation' to keep us going – hurrah!

If you're conscious of rising energy bills, however, how can you cook your favourite comfort food in the most energy-efficient way possible?

Sarah Scrivener, smart energy expert at British Gas, says: "When fighting the chills with winter warmers, it's important to remember you don't need to have the oven on for long periods, when whipping up comfort food in the microwave takes minutes."

She also recommends upgrading to smart meters to see exactly how much money you're spending in the kitchen in real time as you're cooking, avoiding surprise energy bills.

Here are Scrivener's top tips for energy-efficient winter warmers:

1. JACKET SPUDS

Cook a jacket potato in the microwave for 10 minutes, rather than a whole hour in the oven, and save around 32p. With the average large jacket potato costing 25p, this saving can actually be more than the price of the potato itself!

2. BEANS ON TOAST

Heat baked beans in the microwave rather than on the hob, then let the heat of the beans melt the cheese instead of putting it under the grill. Tuck into beans on toast with this method once a week over the winter months, and you could save 36p.

3. PUMPKIN PIE

Save energy (and precious time) by swapping fresh pumpkin for a handy can of pumpkin puree - the perfect consistency for pie filling. It might be tempting to use fresh pumpkin for this autumn classic, however, avoid using the hob to boil the pumpkin and save 21p when cooking three pies - plenty for celebrating with family and friends.

4. MAC CHEESE

Although macaroni cheese is traditionally made with a white sauce or roux, there are great recipes for a one-pot mac 'n' cheese – boil the pasta in milk and allow the starch to thicken the milk into a sauce, then add cheese. By keeping all the ingredients in one pan on the hob and using five-minute quick-cook pasta, you can save 24p per four servings. Simply dig in once it's ready on the hob and skip the oven, and you'll save a further 11p on top.

5. CHILLI CON CARNE

Keep the cold at bay with a warming chilli con carne and save 36p by cooking rice in a microwave steamer rather than on the hob for your weekly chilli night during the winter - there's much less chance of burning the bottom too!

6. SHEPHERD'S PIE

Let the meat thaw in the fridge overnight so it's ready to cook the next day and pop the potatoes in the microwave until they're soft enough to mash - without using the hob, you can save £1.20 on your winter supply of shepherd's pie.

7. CASSEROLE

Whether you're using beef, lamb or pork, cook casserole in a slow cooker over several hours, rather than in the oven. Not only is the meat guaranteed to be melt-in-the-mouth tender, but you'll also be saving 40p. Help the meat to cook even more quickly and use less energy by cutting into smaller pieces.

8. SOUP

Use a lid to trap heat when making soup. It maintains the same level of boiling without having the hob turned up as high, and can save up to 3% in energy costs per pot. To save even more energy, try making simple soups in the microwave, such as a warming chicken noodle soup - this can save up to 50p for a family serving, versus making it on the hob.

9. ROAST DINNER

Pre-boil potatoes before roasting them. Or better still, pop them in the microwave for five minutes before crisping up in the oven and cut energy costs by 75%. Cooking a roast chicken in a pressure cooker takes around half the time compared to in an oven, and it's especially good for extra succulence. If you like it crispy, simply put it in the oven for around 15 minutes at the end.

10. HOT CHOC

Hot chocolate is a low cost and energy-efficient way to warm up on a cold winter night.

Using hot chocolate powder and boiling only the water you need in the kettle can cost as little as 1p in energy. If you like it milky, boiling milk on the hob will cost just 2p.

Tuck into microwave beans on toast once a week over the winter months and you could save 36p

Cook a jacket potato in the microwave and save around 32p

Hot chocolate is cheap, cheery and delicious

Early birds have it all wrapped up by December

Have you got your Christmas shopping all wrapped up? For some people, it could pay off to head to the shops early.

While you may not feel in the festive mood just yet, new research suggests many people started stocking up for Christmas well before shops started putting up their displays.

Nearly one in four (23%) of us had started our Christmas shopping by September or earlier, a survey from VoucherCodes.co.uk has found.

And with worries about stretching the budget over the festive season, many have been thinking ahead.

Just over two in five (42%) people have been putting a bit of cash away every month throughout the year to be able to afford Christmas.

Many are so well prepared that 23% expect to have the festive shopping all wrapped up by the first week of December.

Although there are always some who like to leave it to the last minute – with nearly one in 10 (9%) confessing they will be making a last-minute dash on Christmas Eve to finish buying their presents.

It's clear that cost pressures are on many people's minds when it comes to Christmas shopping habits – and with much discussion taking place in recent weeks about rising prices, it may well pay for some shoppers to plan ahead.

Nearly one in four (22%) people surveyed were concerned about the impact the festive season could have on their wallet.

And it's little wonder when, according to the research, households are typically expected to spend £780 on Christmas, including gifts, food and drink, and cards and decorations.

Many plan to take advantage of shopping bonanzas to help them save money.

The survey among more than 2,000 people found that 22% of people are planning to shop on Black Friday (November 25), while 17% plan to splash the cash on Cyber Monday (November 28).

But before joining the stampede, it may well be worth doing your research before these shopping days – to check out whether what's billed as a "bargain" really is worth it.

Technology is also playing a big role in shoppers' quests to scout out the best deals this year.

Nearly half (49%) of those surveyed will be shopping online this Christmas, with nearly a third (29%) planning to make festive purchases on their smartphones.

Those planning on hitting the high street are also doing their homework online first, with nearly one in five (19%) using mobile technology to find deals on-the-go.

The research suggests women are savvier than men when it comes to comparing prices on the high street with those online, with 21% of female Christmas shoppers admitting to searching for deals online while in-store, compared to just 16% of men.

There are also signs that rising prices may make this year particularly tricky for Christmas bargain hunters.

Official figures recently showed the consumer price index (CPI) rate of inflation accelerated to 1% in September – the highest level seen in nearly two years.

Economists have warned the weak pound could feed through to further price increases at the tills in the coming months. This has led some commentators to suggest that this year, it really may pay off to do your Christmas shopping early.

GET YOUR FESTIVE FINANCES ON TRACK

We're now more than half way through the tax year – and with the expense of the festive season ahead, it's a good time to check whether your savings are on track.

Here are some tips from Clare Francis, savings and investments director at Barclays:

:: Even putting aside small amounts can help when it comes to saving.

:: Don't overlook your ISA allowance. The ISA allowance for the 2016/2017 tax year is £15,240. And the new personal savings allowance (PSA) means basic rate taxpayers can now earn £1,000 of savings interest a year without having to pay any tax on it. The PSA for higher rate taxpayers is £500.

:: It's important to have some cash savings even if you are happy to take the additional risk of stock market investments.

:: Set savings goals. They could range from a "rainy day" fund to life events such as a house deposit or retirement.

Still that special Bond with packed audience

HELLO Mr Bond, we've been expecting you! Sir Roger Moore, the smoothest James Bond, charmed a near-sell out audience at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre.

But is he the best? "Well of course," said the 89-year-old as he arrived at the stage door to huge excitement in the city.

The star of The Saint and The Persuaders entertained for nearly three hours with hilarious anecdotes about his 70 years in show business.

The Afternoon with... show was a major coup for the city, with just nine taking place across the country this month with tickets as much as £125.

Secrets

Sir Roger told how he would play jokes on his co-stars while filming Bond, as well as lifting the lid on some of Hollywood's secrets. He arrived for his first visit to the city to a hoard of autograph hunters, who Sir Roger was more than happy to oblige.

On stage he struck a mischievous and cheeky tone as part of a playful double act with compere Gareth Owen.

"He spoke of how he started out at drama school during the Second World War and how he was first signed by MGM Studios and later Warner Brothers in the US. But it was anecdotes about his time as 007 that the audience was hankering for most.

"I used to drive the directors mad," he said. "I'd look at the camera and say, 'the names Bond, Brook Bond'. The next take, the same again, 'the names Bond, Barry Bond'. It would drive them crazy."

He revealed what it was like to work with Bond girls. "Any chance of romance was gone when you looked up and saw 12 or 13 blokes up in the lighting gantry gesturing 'go on Roge'."

Sir Roger Moore signs autographs at the stage door of the Grand Theatre

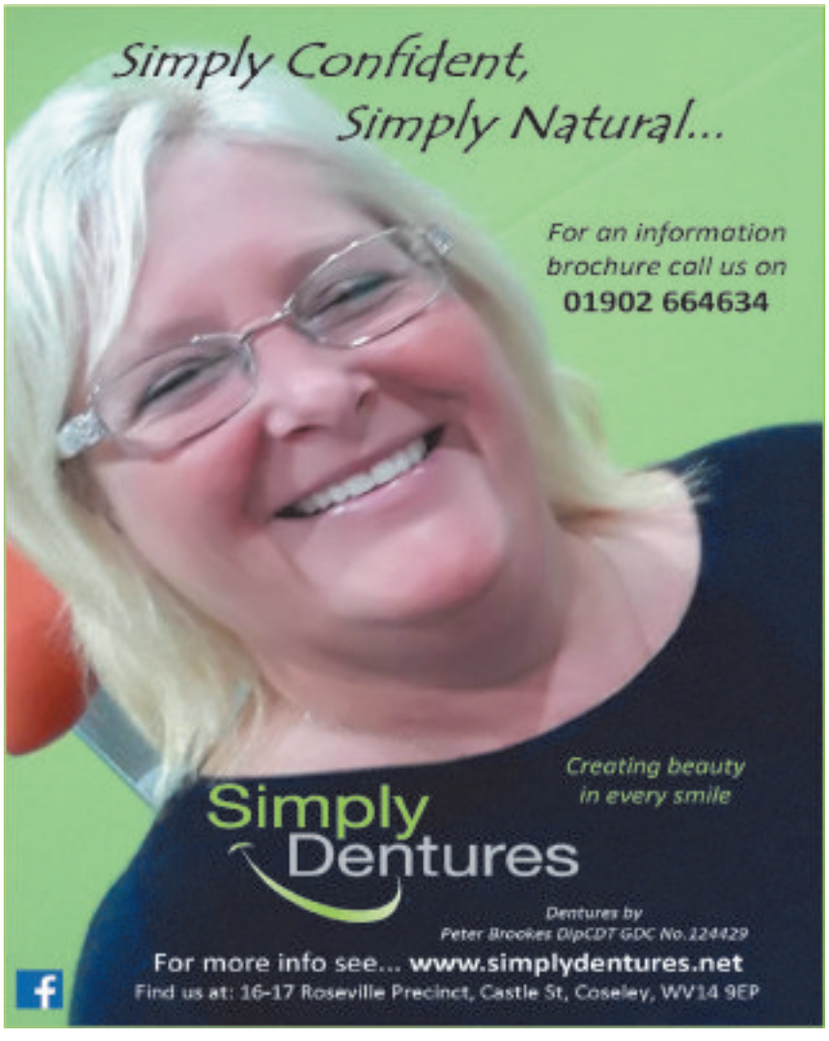
Festive joy thanks to church

A WARM-HEARTED congregation has joined together to bring festive joy to families living on the breadline.

Members of Kings Community Church, Oldbury, have filled and packaged more than 30 hampers of food and other essentials to deliver to people in the local community.

The church runs a Christians Against Poverty debt centre in partnership with national charity Cap, so it sees the real hardship that some people have to endure. "We know there is a serious, immediate need among some of the people in our care," said Matthew Nott, Minister.

Meanwhile, Kings Community Church will be hosting a list of festive services including a Carol service on Friday December 23, at 7pm. Oldbury Debt Centre, based at Kings Community Church offers people a free debt counselling service which, uniquely, is done through home visits. Anyone wanting to donate to Cap's hamper appeal can call capuk.org/christmas



Mel's making merry without fears for waist

SMETHWICK-BASED health guru Mel Carpenter says: Don't go overboard at Christmas!

As the dark nights draw in and we get ever closer to the festive season, it is soeasy to over indulge!

In my experience (in the fitness industry), Christmas is the time of year where most people gain weight an average of about 7lbs (that's a new born baby)!

Fitness guru Mel

We are all guilty of it and whilst gaining a couple of lbs isn't too bad, gaining around half a stone is definitely not ideal!

So, here are some tips to see you through this period....

1. PLAN AHEAD!

It will be much easier to buy healthy food alongside those festive treats if you write a list. Make sure you include plenty of fruit and vegetables alongside the Christmas Pud and the other fattening goodies which are synonymous with the Yuletide season.

2. DON'T BUY TOO MUCH!

It's only one day guys, the shops are not going to run out of food and let's face it, there are only surely so many mince pies you can eat before you end up getting sick of the sight of them!

You can add the extras to your normal shop or even buy a couple of things each week (I bought my sauces and my tinned veg this week), this will reduce the panic shopping in the run up to the big day!

3. GET THE KIDS TO HELP!

Christmas is (for me at least) a time for hanging out with my family, watching the kids get whipped up into a frenzy and making memories.

My children are a bit older so I plan on getting my daughter to help with the dinner and my son to help lay the table with Daddy.

They both love to help out and it teaches them about your family traditions, whilst creating your own.

Whatever you end up doing, make sure you enjoy it, go easy on the chocolates and the Baileys and try and schedule in a short walk after your nap in front of the TV on Boxing Day!

Bosses welcome scheme to speed up housing plan

A SCHEME that could speed up plans for up to 900 homes in Smethwick has been welcomed by Sandwell Council regeneration bosses.

The Sandwell Housing Zone includes Grove Lane, Smethwick, was recenly announced by the Government. The scheme also allows for up to 700 homes in Friar Park, Wednesbury.

By David Cosgrove

Grove Lane involves a group of sites, amounting to 30 hectares in multiple ownership.

It also forms part of the Greater Icknield and Smethwick Housing Growth Area recently launched by the West Midlands Combined Authority in collaboration with Sandwell Council and Birmingham City Council.

Investment

This will drive a £400 million development of 5,160 new homes on five brownfield sites in the adjoining areas of Greater Icknield, in Birmingham, and Smethwick.

Councillor Paul Moore, cabinet member for regeneration and economic investment, said: "This is an important step forward in bringing these sites together to make these new homes a reality.

"It will take several years to do this but Housing Zone status gives Sandwell access to extra Government funding to help bring forward these developments."

The Housing Zones scheme aims to fast-track the construction of 10,000 new homes on various brownfield sites across the country, which used to house factories.

Housing Minister Gavin Barwell said councils could bid for a share of an £18m fund to help overcome planning issues that can delay and prevent builders from getting on site and starting work quickly.

Leader of Sandwell Council Steve Eling welcomed the initiative but has said more support would be needed to take developments forward.

He said: "At these early stages we don't know that much about it but at present we have only got brownfield sites left to develop in Sandwell and it is something we have been banging the drum about for years."

Boxing legend Pat Cowdell with Pete Allen, left, and Chris Sutton

Cowdell a knockout at roadshow

IT was a knockout day as boxing legend Pat Cowdell spoke of his career highlights at Smethwick Heritage Centre.

Cowdell, from Smethwick, gave the rare talk as part of the centre's Christmas Roadshow, even bringing along his Lonsdale belt. More than 500 people attended.

Centre manager Chris Sutton led the interview. He said: "He does not do many interviews, so I think this was a rarity for us. He was a lovely, quiet chap but didn't mind speaking about his life and career."

Cowdell won a bantamweight bronze medal at the 1976 Montreal Olympics, two years after claiming Commonwealth Gold in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Mr Sutton continued: "We hope that Pat will get involved with us again and I think we'll be offering him a free membership for the centre as a thank you.

Kevan's softly, softly approach to security

"AGGRESSION does not solve the problem; it's kindness that makes the difference," so says Kevan Parry, Security Officer at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, and it is a sentiment he follows every day.

Kevan has been working in the trust's security team since 2006.

It is not an exaggeration to say that no two days at work are ever the same for him.

He explained: "As a security officer, I always try my best to protect everyone's safety.

"It's a challenging job as you never know what to expect, and so you need to be prepared every time."

Kevan is well-respected for his polite and approachable manner even in the most heated situation.

When asked how he keeps calm in challenging circumstances, he said: "I'm quite fortunate in the sense that I am an amateur boxer and that requires enormous self-discipline.

Situation

"Through boxing I have learned how to keep myself calm and control the situation. I think this plays a large part in helping me do a good job."

Not only practicing himself, Kevan also trains teenagers at the Warley ABA (boxing) club.

In the past he has even pulled young people out of gangs, and trained them to become boxing trainers themselves.

He said: "My dad was an army boxing champion so he taught me a lot.

He trained me and although I never took it up professionally, I enjoy being an amateur boxer and have even won a few titles along the way.

"It's nice to help kids get back on the right track.

"I always treat them like my children and some of them even call me 'Pop'. It's very rewarding to see them grow and succeed."

Before becoming a security officer, Kevan was originally trained in engineering and he has trained fellow workers in a factory in Smethwick, where the Midland Met Hospital is being built now.

When the factory closed, his wife, who was the deputy manager for the Post Graduate Centre at City Hospital, suggested he apply for the position of security officer at the hospital, and he has never looked back on that decision.

"I always make sure I give 110 per cent to what I do.

"I enjoy every aspect of the job and I absolutely love my team. I couldn't ask for a better team.

We don't really fear anything as we know we have each other's back.

"It's a great opportunity to work in the NHS and by ensuring everyone is safe, I feel that I have made a difference.

"I always ask everyone if I can do anything to help them.

"Staff always call us as they know we will do the best that we can and go the extra mile for our patients and staff."

Kevan's hero is the world champion boxer Muhammad Ali.

He explained: "Despite his challenging background, he still went all the way to become the greatest boxer of all time.

"Muhammad is a true inspiration as in his lifetime he not only stood up for himself but also for people's rights."

Kevan lives with his wife in Halesowen.

In his free time, Kevan and his wife love exploring the UK in their touring caravan, as they feel there are so many beautiful places in Britain to see.

Their children have all grown up and are professionals in healthcare and graphic design.

NHS HEROES

ONCE again we focus some of our time on the quiet heroes of the NHS, from a wide variety of backgrounds doing a wide variety of jobs.

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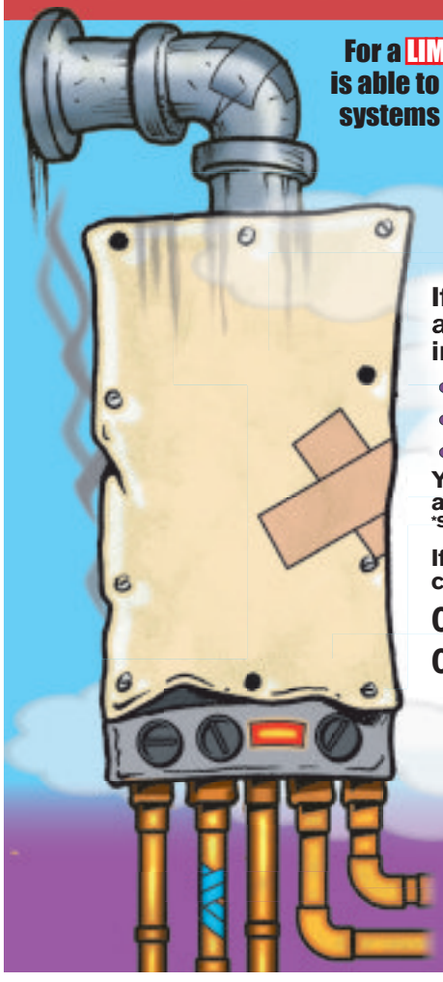

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A decade of dedicated service at the Queen's Head Fish Bar

Commercial feature

The chips aren't down at Queens Head Fish Bar in Oldbury, they are very much on the up and up as the eatery celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Ranjit Tagger, his brother and family run this successful chip shop in Londonderry Road. They took it over a decade ago because Ranjit wanted to be self-employed and grow his own enterprise.

It was decided to have a refurb in 2012 due to the ongoing problem of customers queuing down the road – therefore they wanted to make changes for the customers to ensure a better service overall.

Over the years the family has built up mutual respect with their customers and when entering the chip shop you feel the warm, friendly atmosphere.

Queens Head Fish Bar has a good reputation for their fresh food daily and they also have separate fryers for vegetarians.

Ranjit said that he felt the success of the takeaway is thanks to the building up of good relationships, good staff and good food.

Ranjit and the family want to say a massive thank you to all new and existing customers for a wonderful 10 years and they hope they have many more to come.

The family and staff outside the Queens Head Fish Bar in Londonderry Road, Oldbury

Protests over leather museum move

Sheila Emery voices her opinion with the demonstrators outside Walsall Leather Museum

DOZENS of protesters demonstrated outside Walsall Leather Museum against plans to relocate it to within he central library.

The cost-cutting measure has been put forward by Walsall Council which is looking to save £86million over the next four years.

Last Monday more than 30 people, including former leather tradespeople, took to the Littleton Street West venue to display their anger at the idea.

The have argued the museum, which opened in 1988, will lose its attraction if it is moved.

Mother-of-three Sam Hale, aged 51, who co-ordinated the demonstration has been a visiting artist in the museum before.

She said: "The building is part of the experience. I have been there when people who used to work in the trade have been there and when they walk into the place they are just transported back. You walk in and you can smell the leather.

"The museum is an important part of our heritage. It is sad to say but if our leather factories weren't to survive this would be our main reminder of our town's trade.

"It is something for us to be proud of. This is the story of Walsall men and women. Leather was the lifeblood of the town. I'm astounded they want to get rid of it. If you move it it becomes a totally different experience and it will lose its uniqueness."

More than 2,400 people have signed a petition to save the museum.

The move is part of the plans to reduce the number of libraries in the borough placing more emphasis on the Lichfield Street Central Library which would incorporate the leather museum and the Local History Centre.

The move would save £2.9million a year but see 130 jobs lost.

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Women's pension fears raised by MP

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has demanded extra support from the Government for Black Country women who may have been hit by pension changes.

Mr Austin was speaking in a Parliamentary debate on changes to the state pension age for women born in the 1950s.

Government plans will accelerate rises to the state pension age for women, so that it will reach 66 by 2020, instead of 2026 as originally planned.

Mr Austin has been working alongside the group Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) to help get their voices heard.

Speaking during the course of the debate in the House of Commons, he said: "Women in the Black Country have done their bit, and that is why the Government should be coming up with proper transitional arrangements so that they can plan properly for their retirement now."

Members of British Military Fitness Stourbridge are pictured during their fun in aid of the Poppy Appeal

Fitness fanatics run up cash for the Royal British Legion

A MILITARY fitness club marked Remembrance Day with a fundraising run to three local war memorials, laying crosses and wreaths at each of the sites.

The venture by the fitness group based at Stevens Park in Wollescote raised more than £1,000 for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal.

Members of British Military Fitness Stourbridge decided to collect money for the Royal British Legion by taking part in a run totalling more than 10k. For all that distance they also carried a stretcher with weight loaded equivalent to a typical human being.

They started at 9.30am at Stevens Park, then ran to Quarry Bank war memorial. After paying their respects, the team carried on to Brierley Hill war memorial, before finishing at Stourbridge memorial.

Donations

Collecting donations in buckets along the way, as well as via a Justgiving page, the runners have managed to smash their £500 target and have so far gathered an impressive total in excess of £1,000

To donate search BMF Stourbridge Remembrance Stretcher Trek on the justgiving.com website.

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Dog ban at Himley grounds is challenged

A DOG owner has hit out at a decision to permanently ban pets from using certain sections of a popular park.

Dudley Council, which runs the park, has confirmed that following its trial of a dog free zone in Himley Park, which started in February, it had decided to keep the ban in place.

The authority said it made the move after 78 per cent of people the council surveyed supported the dog free area.

By Judith Hawkins

The survey, however, has been challenged by dog owner Cath Molineux, who said: "I don't believe it and I would question its robustness. I'd be interested to hear how they selected the people they spoke to for the survey, and how many of them were dog owners."

Mrs Molineux, who lives in Coseley, says she enjoys walking her white German shepherd Rosie at the park.

Fraternity

"There is a nice dog-walking fraternity down there," she said. "But they haven't spoken to any of us about what we think."

The 54-year-old expressed her surprised that the ban was ever introduced, having not heard of issues between dog owners and other members of the public prior to its introduction.

"There were already areas where people didn't walk their dogs anyway," she said.

"I think they have just had this idea and now they don't want to backtrack on it."

Dudley Council said the ban was introduced to provide families with an area free from dogs, where they could enjoy walking, playing games and picnics.

The zone, which amounts to around a fifth of the park, stretches from the main entrance to the West Gate, running alongside Himley Road.

The council says it has been speaking to the park's visitors throughout the year to gauge opinion on the trial scheme.

They say that of 251 people surveyed, 78 per cent said they were in favour of the dog free area, with 62 per cent in support of keeping the dog ban in place all year round.

The council said these findings and previous requests from the public led them to the decision to keep the ban in force.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "It is important we listen to people who use the park and gauge their opinion. The survey results have made it quite clear that a majority of people are in favour of the scheme."

Assistance dogs on leads are still allowed in the dog free zone.

Famous stationery brand to disappear

OFFICE stationery brand Staples is to disappear from the UK after its American owner sold the struggling business.

The UK arm of Staples – which employs around 1,100 staff across 106 stores in Britain – has been bought by restructuring specialist Hilco for a 'nominal sum'.

Hilco said it would phase out the Staples brand in the UK over the coming months.

Staples currently has a branch of the Keyway Retail Park in Willenhall, at Tildesley Street in West Bromwich and another in Kidderminster.

A shop at Merry Hill was shut in 2013 as part of two dozen Staples store closures.

Plans for the store estate and the impact on staff are not yet known.

Hilco is understood to be carrying out an in-depth review of the business over the next few months as it also comes up with a new brand name.

Taxi drivers' DVD targets child sexual exploitation

TAXI drivers are attempting to stamp out child sexual exploitation by creating a video highlighting the first signs of danger.

The video, called Deceived, aims to educate drivers and make them aware if they are carrying any vulnerable passengers, and to encourage them to report any possible crime.

Shaz Saleem, chairman of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association, wrote, produced and directed the piece with the help of fellow drivers. He said: "This is by far the most important piece of work the association has done.

"Recently, we signed a pledge to tackle this crime but we want our actions to speak louder. The association is committed to ensuring the safety of our customers and we will not shy away from our role.

"Personally I want to thank everyone who has supported Deceived, from the cast to those who have advised and guided us throughout. "

Music was created by Falcon Taxis driver, Waqas Rizwan, with the role of the driver played by Amran Hussain from Express Taxis in Halesowen. Lucy is played by Rianna Edwards. Earlier this year the association created a video to make customers aware of the difference between a private hire car and a Hackney cab as part of its Be Safe Campaign.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, David Jamieson, said: "The only way to tackle hidden crimes is to bring them out of the darkness into the light and confront them head on."

l Visit www.expressandstar.com to see the video

The role of lead character 'Lucy' is played by Rianna Edwards

Deceived aims to encourage drivers to report any possible crime

Motorway projects on right road, says chief

MORE than £600 million worth of motorway projects are making 'real progress', according to the country's top highways executive.

Jim O'Sullivan, chief executive of Highways England, said five major projects – including the improvement of junction 10 of the M6 between Wolverhampton and Walsall – will bring more jobs and boost the region's economy.

By Rob Golledge

He made the comments as he gave the opening speech of a two-day Highways UK event at the NEC in Birmingham.

He said: "We are currently delivering more than £15 billion of investment in over 100 major schemes across England that will enhance, renew and improve the network.

"It's fantastic to see key projects like these in the Midlands making real progress.

Strategic

"The Midlands is at the heart of England's strategic road network and investment in schemes like these benefits the whole country. This region really is the 'Midlands Engine' which drives the country."

He said that planning is set to begin next month for the M6 junction 10 improvements with a public consultation launching in January. Construction is set to start in April 2019, finishing in late 2020.

The overhaul will see lanes going over the motorway increase from two to four with bridges rebuilt to ease congestion.

The initial plans are at the design stage but will be revealed early next year. More details will be announced shortly of how people can take part and find out more, he said.

The M6 junction 10 currently experiences significant congestion and traffic delays, particularly during morning and evening rush hours.

Road capacity problems have been identified as one of the main transport issues facing the Black Country within the West Midlands Local Transport Plan. Highways England is working with Walsall Council to deliver the overhaul.

It aims to remove the need for long term maintenance of the existing structure as well as increasing capacity at the junction and thereby reduce congestion.

It is hoped this will improve access to nearby sites set for development and improve accessibility for cyclists.

He said key progress had been made on the £106m A45/A46 Tollbar End improvement scheme in Coventry.

Jobs joy as business drive is paying off

DEVELOPMENT at business sites across Staffordshire is gathering pace as the drive to create better quality jobs continues with near full employment in Staffordshire.

Statistics issued by the ONS show that the Staffordshire claimant count decreased slightly between September and October and stands at 0.9 per cent of the local population (compared to one per cent the previous month). The regional figure is 2.3 per cent and national 1.8 per cent.

The figures were announced in the same week as the latest business addition to i54 South Staffordshire, while the go-ahead was given by the county council to carry out the next phase of supporting works at the Bericote Four Ashes site, also in South Staffordshire.

Work is already taking place on the Bericote site in preparation for the relocation of Spanish automotive parts supplier Gestamp, which will bring a workforce of 800 to its new 500,000 sq ft base.

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Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, November 24, 2016

Try auction house for seasonal decorations

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips

YES, here we are again, already in the thrall of the forthcoming festive season – so I thought this week we'd take a look at what you could possibly snap up at auction to add to those seasonal decorations!

We always tend to stick to the standard tree with its baubles and tinsel – but why not think about using lovely displays of winter foliage, berries, holly, ivy and firethorn in some vintage vases and jugs?

Display your scented potpourri, fir-cones and nuts in Victorian dishes and bowls, use little china plates on which to put gold-papered chocolate coins and wrapped sweets.

Utilise cups and saucers as tea-light holders, and look out for reasonably-priced candle-holders – not only for the Christmas dinner table but elsewhere in the house, the traditional 'Wee Willy Winky' single candle holder with handle looks good anywhere.

Also look out for vintage plant holders, these would be great for poinsettia, tiny Christmas trees and decorated displays of twisted willow.

Think about adding traditional, warm colours such as red, green and gold and look out for any items that will do this – little 1950s Pyrex soup dishes are perfect, for example, and vintage wine glasses look great on display.

Again, look out for those pretty vintage bowls in which to display fruit and small table crackers, and if you're feeling particularly adventurous see if you can find a sleigh or toboggan on which to display presents . . . if we get a white Christmas it will serve a dual purpose!

And don't forget your festive dining table.

We're already selling pretty runners decorated with holly and mistletoe (replicas of originals) and china sets edged with gold.

It doesn't have to cost a fortune, or even necessarily match, but old china looks so good on a dining table and will have many other uses throughout the year, both practically and on display around the home.

Look for assorted vintage plates with decoration in seasonal colours and meat chargers, jugs and gravy boats and Royal Crown Derby fruit bowls and candlesticks (Royal Crown Derby is popular at present).

Small Coalport sugar bowls are great for sweets, chocolates and nuts, and if you find an old soup tureen do buy it – you can still get beautiful Georgian ones, it doesn't matter if the lid is missing.

You can pick up very attractive George Jones bowls, again perfect for fruit, and a brightly decorated Majolica plate would make a nice table centrepiece, complete with tea lights.

Old china baskets are lovely containers for bread rolls, and you might even buy a vintage tea service in which to serve Earl Grey on Christmas afternoon!

Perry and Phillips Auctioneers in Low Town, Bridgnorth, holds sales of antiques and collectables on the first Tuesday of each month. Valuation days, for sale items only, are held every Wednesday at the Mill Street saleroom, from 10am until 4pm.
The next sale takes place on Tuesday, December 6, viewing is during the weekend and on the Monday prior to the sale.

Magical time for little children and 'big kids'

What's your festive theme?

THIS week I have seen the first sparkling Christmas trees in windows. Charming twinkling lights over a month before the magical day. My seasonal decorations do not grace our house until after my husbands birthday in mid December, much to the disappointment of our son when he was younger. Every year I dress the tree in the same decorations passed down to me from my parents and aunt, beautiful delicate glass baubles in every colour that shimmer and glint. The rest of the family finding it a massive chore to hang the hundred plus baubles and more than their life is worth to drop and break one!

Today's style is a single colour with sparse large baubles, neatly tied bows and glinting icicles and there is a star topper placed easily on the top. As a child I remember precariously reaching to tie on a tiny fairy with string and wrapping tinsel around the circumference, round and round and round.

LED and fibre optic embellishment of trees and trimmings has given a contemporary look to the overall modern Christmas and our gardens glitter with pretty lights, our houses with festive ambience and perfume. There is so much delight in the faces of children as Christmas creeps into their environment.

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis

This year I notice the brightly coloured nutcracker soldiers, tiny to tall, everywhere, a flip back to the toy soldiers from the past. There are hooks specifically to hang the elaborate stockings on the fireplace, garlands to dress the staircase, vintage wreaths on the door, chair covers, table decorations and even loo roll.

Originally trees were decorated with fruit and nuts and then in the 18th century candles were attached to the branches to add illumination until electrification gave us the lighting of today.

Vikings and Saxons worshipped trees and it is believed this is where our Christmas customs came from originally. Prince Albert, beloved husband of Queen Victoria, is credited with having introduced the Christmas tree to England in 1840 but it is believed it was brought here much, much earlier.

Every store gives over a huge area to Christmas and gives us all an excuse to spend our hard- earned money, there are fantastic selections in Tesco, Asda, Dunelm, The Range, Homebase, Matalan and many more including delightful high street independents. The likes of Hobbycraft allow us to craft our way through the season and give us ideas to create a fairytale on a budget, that is how our ancestors made Christmas so magical.

You may not be an expert when it comes to wrapping the gifts you have bought but the luxury stores will do it for you and alternatively you can buy beautiful bags and boxes, ribbons and bows and the newest trend is 'furoshiki', the Japanese art of wrapping gifts in cloth. Ultimately anything goes, as long as it is enchanting and fascinating, Christmas is for little children and 'big kids' and so much can be achieved with a little imagination.

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Tests indicated that those who have an older biological age can restore a younger pattern of glycans, simply by overhauling their lifestyle

New test reveals your true, inner body age

Your biological age may be very different

THINK you know how old you are? Yes, OK, you might know the date on your birth certificate, and the number of candles on your birthday cake – but while these show your chronological age, your biological age – how time, genes and lifestyle have taken a toll on your body – could be very different.

But now, a new test can tell you what the difference is between your chronological and biological ages – and suggest what you can do if you're much older on the inside than you should be.

WHAT IS THE GLYCANAGE TEST?

After testing more than 40,000 people worldwide, an international research team has developed the GlycanAge test to assess the levels of tiny sugar molecules – glycans – in the blood.

Glycans attach to proteins in the immune system, and form distinctive patterns on the protein molecules. These patterns change with age, and as certain patterns are typical at certain ages, identifying how much an individual person's patterns differ from the norm for their age indicates whether they're ageing at a faster or slower rate than normal.

By Lisa Salmon

Tim Spector, a professor of genetic epidemiology at King's College London, who's part of the GlycanAge team, says: "We have been studying ageing in twins for 20 years and studying many different markers and predictors of age and biological age.

"This is the best I have come across to date, although we do not understand the mechanisms yet."

WHY AM I AGEING BEYOND MY YEARS?

Your genes and lifestyle can affect the glycan patterns in your body and, not surprisingly, the lifestyle factors linked to glycan ageing include smoking, obesity, lack of exercise, poor diet, raised cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and chronic stress.

Another glycan-ageing factor is the drop in oestrogen levels after menopause, as oestrogen protects against ageing.

This means that while men tend to age steadily from their 30s, women often age 50 per cent faster for five years after the menopause.

However, the good news for those who have an older biological age is that tests indicate that you can restore a younger pattern of glycans, simply by overhauling your lifestyle.

WHAT IS YOUR TRUE AGE?

People who want to take the test can do so via one of the health practitioners on the GlycanAge.com website.

The GlycanAge team is still trying to improve its test, and is collaborating with Kings College London on a project to be conducted between 2017 and 2018.

They want to recruit 1,000 people who are undergoing a positive dietary, physical and/or psychological lifestyle change, and follow their progress for three to six months.

Participants who stick to their planned lifestyle change will be offered the GlycanAge test at a non-profit price.

For more information about the test or to register to take part in the project, visit glycanage.com

fast the ticket

It's snowtime!

Return of The Nutcracker - Page 31

NATIVE MONSTER
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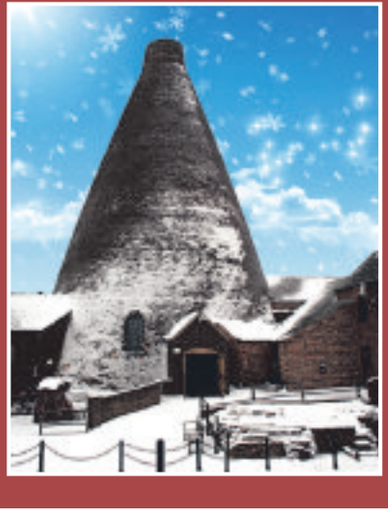

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Katie Melua

Thursday (Dec 1), 7pm Symphony Hall, The songstress is joined by the 23-strong Gori Women's Choir as she explores her Georgian musical roots, as heard on the In Winter album, and sings a selection from previous albums.

Turin Brakes

Wednesday 7pm Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton The former Mercury Prize nominees from London released their seventh album Lost Property at the start of this year and have won a loyal following over 15 years.

Michael Ball & Alfie Boe

Monday and Tuesday 7.30pm Symphony Hall, Birmingham Following the success of their Together album, the musical theatre star and radio host from Bromsgrove teams up with Britain's favourite tenor for two consecutive nights in Brum.

Dirty Dancing

Various times Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton A new production of the romantic movie drama set at a 1960s US resort where dance passions run high. Lewis Griffiths as Johnny and debutant Katie Hartland as Baby (pictured).

Dahl's marvellous medicine is real cure for the blues

He passed away more than 25 years ago, but Roald Dahl remains Britain's favourite children's writer.

His books have sold an astonishing 250 million copies worldwide and The Times placed him 16th on their list of Great British Writers since 1945.

Among his most popular works were James and the Giant Peach, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda, The Witches, Fantastic Mr Fox, The BFG, The Twits and George's Marvellous Medicine – all books that mean so much to children everywhere with their ability to shock, frighten and delight in equal measure.

And George's Marvellous Medicine has been brought to the stage at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre, running until Saturday, by the Birmingham Stage Company.

Temper

It has been adapted by David Wood and features Dahl's amazing story about a young boy who makes a marvellous new medicine to cure his grandmother of her terrifying temper.

But when his grandmother drinks his special new potion, the most incredible things start to happen. And George's adventure has just begun.

George's Marvellous Medicine is one of Dahl's funniest and most exciting stories.

It follows Birmingham Stage Company's acclaimed productions of Horrible Histories, Why The Whales Came and Danny The Champion of The World – another Roald creation.

Writer Wood said he was delighted to work on the piece, which is his eighth Roald Dahl adaptation.

He said: "It's been on tour before and it's coming back. It's just doing a number of weeks. I'm hoping it will be as successful as before.

"I think it's an interesting one really because it's not one of the big titles, like BFG or James and the Giant Peach.

"One tends to think of them as the big ones but this has a great appeal partly because George is being quite naughty in a way and there is a subversive element, as there is in many Dahl stories.

Scary – George's Marvellous Medicine with Ed Thorpe as George and Deborah Vale as Grandma

"What interested me is the fact that the grandmother, who disappears quite magically by the end of the play, is extraordinary.

She's a grandmother who is particularly annoying and he tries to make her nicer. His medicine is not to kill her off, it's to improve her. But it has strange consequences to do with scale as she grows."

Wood says the audience at New Alexandra Theatre will be almost like a football match as youngsters get into the action.

They will shout and scream their support for the lead character, warning him of any danger.

He loves working with Roald Dahl stories, having first adapted The BFG 25 years ago.

"I have grown to admire very much his storytelling skills over the years. He knew what

A tense moment for George as Grandma loses her temper

It's a cracker of a festive favourite

Jonathan Caguioa as the Nutcracker and Yasuo Atsuji as King Rat in BRB's production Photo: Roy Smiljanic

THE festive season is upon us and that means Birmingham Royal Ballet are returning home to present its annual Christmas treat for the people of the West Midlands, The Nutcracker.

This most Christmassy of all ballets is a much-loved family favourite and will be staged at Birmingham Hippodrome from Friday (November 25) until December 13. This world-famous production by Sir Peter Wright, with exquisite designs by John Macfarlane, is acclaimed as one of the best in the world.

Created 26 years ago as a gift to the city of Birmingham in thanks for the warm welcome given to the company after its move from London, this magical production has grown into a must-see treat and a fixture on the festival calendar.

This season will feature the 500th performance of the production by Birmingham Royal Ballet.

When young Clara sneaks downstairs on Christmas Eve to play with her new nutcracker doll she is swept up in a fantastic journey filled with toy soldiers, wicked rats, a sugar plum fairy and, of course, her handsome prince.

Featuring the romantic music of Tchaikovsky, The Nutcracker is a spectacular ballet that never fails to cast its wintry spell on audiences.

'Probably my final concert tour'

The only way is Essex. . .

FORMER 1970s heartthrob David Essex takes to the stage at Wolverhampton Civic Hall next week as part of his first major tour in over four years – and he warns it could also be among his last concert appearances.

The 21-date I'll Be Missing You UK tour includes the show in Wolverhampton on Sunday that will see him perform much-loved hits spanning his entire 50-year career.

He shot to fame when he went to an audition for the London production of the musical Godspell and was chosen for the role of Jesus. He received major awards and some ecstatic reviews which saw him find fame in London's West End.

Since then he has enjoyed a remarkable career that has combined concerts, records, theatre, composing, films and television. He has written, recorded and produced albums that have sold in their millions.

He's had 23 Top 30 singles in Britain alone. These include Rock On, which topped the charts in the UK and the US, selling over one million copies. Subsequent hits followed such as Lamplight, Hold Me Close and Gonna Make You A Star which made the singer a household name and attracted crowds for his concerts that resembled the heyday of Beatlemania.

Acting credits included the movies That'll Be The Day and its sequel Stardust, and more recently BBC TV's EastEnders in which he played the head of the Moon family.

He said: "I'm looking forward to getting back on the road with my band for probably my final concert tour – I'll be missing you."

Three divas in one tribute show

POP fans get three divas rolled into one show at Bilston's Robin 2 venue tomorrow (Friday). The 3 Diva Tribute will feature Elly Jarmain as Cher and Madonna, plus Karin Bello as Tina Turner.

Other highlights at the Mount Pleasant venue include Nick Dagger and his Counterfeit Stones on Saturday.

Liverpool duo China Crisis, who had 80s hits with Christian and Wishful Thinking, perform an acoustic set on Sunday.

There is a seated acoustic show from 70s hitmaker Steve Harley on Monday. He had top ten success with Judy Teen, Mr Soft, Make Me Smile and The Phantom of the Opera.

Punk veterans to celebrate 40 years

PUNK veterans The Damned celebrate 40 years since New Rose at the Wulfrun Hall on Tuesday.

Former Stranglers frontman Hugh Cornwell teams up with the Bard of Salford Dr John Cooper Clarke at Birmingham's O2 Academy on Thursday, December 1. Danger! Electric Six play O2 Academy on Wednesday, following sold out shows by Pierce the Veil and Passenger at the Bristol Street venue. 1990s favourites Teenage Fanclub play the O2 Institute in Digbeth on Saturday, where epic synth outfit White Lies play Tuesday and the dramatic Nothing But Thieves Wednesday.

Shiver me timbers, it's Treasure Island

THIS Christmas Birmingham Repertory Theatre is getting ready to set young hearts racing as they set sail for Treasure Island from Friday (November 25) until January 7.

Last year saw record numbers flocking to The Rep for The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, so expectations are high for another festive spectacular at the city centre theatre.

Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale of adventure has been given a new adaptation by Bryony Lavery, whose A Christmas Carol played to packed houses in 2013. Stage and screen actor Michael Hodgson will play Long John Silver.

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, November 24, 2016

CHOICE

Jazzie B

Jazzie B's 1980s: From Dole To Soul (BBC2, 10.30pm)
The Soul II Soul frontman opens up about the decade that made his career, and the against-the-odds story of a young black British musician who became a chart-topping artist. In a decade defined by image, Jazzie created his own unique style which developed into a fashion brand, creating the first black British street style, and helped forge a British multicultural identity for the younger generations through music and art.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Live Snooker: UK Championship. Coverage of the fourth day at the Barbican Centre in York. **2.00** Live International Rugby Union. Scotland v Georgia (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Final Score. **5.20** Celebrity Mastermind. (R) **5.50** BBC News.

6.00 Regional Programme.

6.10 Pointless Celebrities. With Louis Theroux and Nancy Strang, Michael Underwood and Angellica Bell, Calum and Angie Best, and Gary and Harry Lineker. (R)

7.00 Strictly Come Dancing. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present as the pro-celebrity dance contest returns to the Elstree studio dance-hall following the big Blackpool Tower extravaganza last weekend. Only half-a-dozen couples remain now, and all 12 competitors will be hoping they can either maintain their standing on the leaderboard, or claw their way back into a safe position as the contest's finale looms ever closer. As ever, the contestants will be called upon to demonstrate their individual routines, but in a first for the annual contest, judges Len Goodman, Darcey Bussell, Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood will also ask them to take part in the Cha Cha Challenge, an energetic new feature for the 2016 competition in which all the stars take to the floor together for a simultaneous performance. At the end of the show, voting lines will be opened to give viewers at home a chance to champion their favourite competitors.

8.10 Michael McIntyre's Big Show. The comedian is joined at London's Theatre Royal by Russell Howard, and pop-rock quintet OneRepublic. **9.10 Casualty.** After a disappointing review, Jacob, Charlie and Duffy decide to challenge the team, questioning if Noel, Louise and David have the heart, brains and courage to do their jobs.

10.00 The National Lottery Live.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day.

11.50 The NFL Show.

12.20 Film: Shifty. (2008) **1.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Film: The Las Vegas Story. (1952) **7.25 Film:** Underwater! (1955) **9.00** Natural World. (R) **10.00** Secret Britain. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** The Good Cook. (R) **12.30** The Best Dishes Ever. (R) **1.00** Hairy Bikers' Best of British. (R) **2.00** Live Snooker: UK Championship. Continuing coverage of the fourth day at the Barbican Centre in York. **5.00** Live International Rugby Union. Wales v South Africa (Kick-off 5.30pm).

7.30 International Rugby Union. England v Argentina. Andrew Cotter presents highlights from Twickenham, where the autumn international schedule was completed with this match against the touring Pumas. England coach Eddie Jones picked the uncapped Sale full-back Mike Haley, Saracens fly-half Alex Lozowski, Bath lock Charlie Ewels, Harlequins prop Kyle Sinckler, Wasps forward Nathan Hughes and Worcester centre Ben Te'o for this series. Northampton flanker Tom Wood also returned to the squad amid an injury crisis in the back row, with Gloucester pair Ben Morgan and Jonny May, alongside Bath second row Dave Attwood, also coming back into the fold.

8.30 Sold! Inside the World's Biggest Auction House. The second of a two-part documentary going behind the scenes at Christie's, where Global President Jussi Pylkkanen and his team continue with their big push into Asia. As the company prepares for its sale to celebrate its 250th anniversary, an umbrella stand turns out to be worth millions and a Rubens appears that has not been seen in public for 150 years.

9.30 The Brits Who Designed the Modern World. Arts reporter Brenda Emmanus profiles 10 of the most celebrated living British designers, including Margaret Calvert, Rick Dickinson, Andrew Ritchie and Kenneth Grange.

10.30 Jazzie B's 1980s: From Dole To Soul. The Soul II Soul frontman opens up about the decade that made his career, and the against-the-odds story of a young black British musician who became a chart-topping artist.

11.30 Snooker: UK Championship.

12.20 Snooker: UK Championship Extra.

2.20 Film: Love. (2011) **3.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.25** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.30** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Looped. **8.30** Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** Wild Australia with Ray Mears. (R) **11.50** Cash Trapped. (R) **12.50** ITV News; Weather. **1.00** This Time Next Year. (R) **2.00** 50 Greatest Harry Potter Moments. (R) **4.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. **4.30** Fantastic Beasts And JK Rowling's Wizarding World. **5.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. Jack P Shepherd, Len Goodman and Liza Tarbuck join Ben Shephard to take part in a special edition of the token-dropping, arcade-inspired quiz show.

7.00 Meet the Parents.

8.00 The X Factor. The number of would-be stars continues to dwindle as the remaining contestants endure another round of tense performances. As ever, any mistakes at this late stage in the contest could mean disaster for the acts, and with the eagerly anticipated finals only two weeks away now, the pressure is becoming ever greater. Louis Walsh, Sharon Osbourne, Nicole Scherzinger and Simon Cowell get comfortable at the judges desks, while Dermot O'Leary offers much-needed moral support to the competitors as they complete their various turns on the stage. At the end of the evening, voting lines are opened, giving viewers at home a chance to back their favourite performers ahead of the results show.

9.50 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!

10.50 ITV News; Weather.

11.10 Film: Carry On Henry. (1971) Comedy, starring Sid James, Kenneth Williams and Joan Sims.

12.50 Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Gillette World Sport. **6.40** Sandman Triathlon. **7.05** The Grid. **7.30** Frasier. (R) **7.55** Frasier. (R) **8.25** Murray Walker Meets Jenson Button. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **9.55** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Practice 3 Live. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. **11.25** Lee McKenzie Meets Mark Webber. **11.55** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Qualifying Live. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. **2.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Newbury and Newcastle. **4.10** Jamie's Super Food. (R) **4.40** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.40** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun.

6.35 Channel 4 News.

7.00 China: Between Clouds and Dreams. A novice monk travels across a plateau to the world's largest Tibetan monastery. Journalists campaigning to save an endangered bird enlist the aid of four schools across Asia, and women seek safe drinking water for their children as chemical pollution has harmful side effects, including the case of a 12-year-old girl with bone marrow disease.

8.00 Britain at Low Tide. Tori Herridge and Alex Langlands investigate Lancashire's coastal archaeology. They explore a beach full of rubble from the Second World War and discover evidence of people and animals dating back for 7000 years. They also discover a story from Liverpool that echoes the plot of classic Ealing comedy Whisky Galore!

9.00 Film: Fast & Furious 6. (2013) A gang of fugitives is reunited by an FBI manhunter, who offers the criminals pardons in return for their help. They must go to Europe and bring down a criminal syndicate led by a ruthless London gangster, whose right-hand woman is an old friend of theirs assumed to be dead. Action thriller sequel, with Vin Diesel, Dwayne Johnson and Michelle Rodriguez.

11.40 Film: Speed. (1994) A cop tries to save the passengers on a bus that is wired to explode if it goes below 50mph. Action thriller, starring Keanu Reeves, Sandra Bullock, Dennis Hopper and Jeff Daniels.

1.45 Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Liam tries to stop Grace meddling in the Osbornes' case. (R) **3.50** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **4.45** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R) **4.50** The Common Denominator. (R) **5.20** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.40** Funniest Falls, Falls & Flops. **11.05** House Doctor. (R) **12.10 Film:** A Puppy for Christmas. (2016) Festive romantic comedy, starring Cindy Busby and Greyston Holt. **1.55 Film:** Wishin' and Hopin' at Christmas. (2014) Premiere. Seasonal tale, starring Molly Ringwald. **3.35 Film:** Guess Who's Coming to Christmas. (2013) Premiere. Comedy, with Drew Lachey. **5.25 Film:** Finding Mrs Claus. (2012) Comedy, starring Mira Sorvino.

7.10 NCIS. (R)

8.00 NCIS: New Orleans. The body of Charles Greene, a master diver in the US Navy, washes ashore. The team determines the specialist's body bears signs of a struggle, and a search of the surrounding area brings the agents into contact with former marine Michael Buckley, who had accompanied Greene on his last dive. According to Buckley, the pair's boat was attacked by two people wearing military gear. The case takes a more sinister turn when Homeland Security agent John Russo arrives in town, investigating a report of an imminent threat to New Orleans from a foreign aggressor. Russo's intelligence states a small submarine has been deployed against US interests, and Greene's body bears all the hallmarks of being hit by a similar submersible. Naval crime drama, starring Scott Bakula and Ivan Sergei.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Rotherham United v Leeds United at the New York Stadium, Newcastle United v Blackburn Rovers at St James' Park, Wolverhampton Wanderers v Sheffield Wednesday at Molineux and Aston Villa v Cardiff City at Villa Park.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in the Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Fleetwood Town and Bury v Millwall.

10.25 The Freddie Mercury Story: Who Wants to Live Forever? (R)

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Chris Tarrant: Extreme Railway Journeys. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 India's Frontier Railways **8.00** Britain's Lost Waterlands: Escape to Swallows and Amazons Country **9.00** Modus **10.30** Horizon: Asteroids – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly **11.30** Classic Soul at the BBC **12.30** Northern Soul: Living for the Weekend **1.30** Top of the Pops: 1982 **2.45** Classic Soul at the BBC **3.45** Close

ITV2
11.20 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **12.50 Film:** Step Up 3 (2010) **1.50** FYI Daily **1.55 Film:** Step Up 3 (2010) **3.00 Film:** The Waterboy (1998) **4.00** FYI Daily **4.05 Film:** The Waterboy (1998) **4.55** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **6.25 Film:** The Mummy (1999) **7.25** FYI Daily **7.30 Film:** The Mummy (1999) **8.45** Scorpion **9.50** The Xtra Factor Live **10.20** Family Guy **10.50** I'm a Celebrity: Extra Camp **11.50** Family Guy **12.50** American Dad! **1.50** Bordertown **2.20** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.50 Agatha Christie's Marple **1.50** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Endeavour **11.00** Midsomer Murders **1.05** Wycliffe **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
12.45 Live Darts: Players Championship. The opening second-round matches. **5.00** Fishing Impossible **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** Live Darts: Players Championship. The concluding second-round matches. **11.00 Film:** Eraser (1996) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15 Film:** Eraser (1996) **1.15** Car Crash Global **2.15** Hell on Wheels **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Black-ish **12.00** How I Met Your Mother **1.00** The Goldbergs **3.00 Film:** The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) **5.15** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.00 Film:** Avatar (2009) **10.30** Gogglebox **11.35** Rude Tube **12.35** Tattoo Fixers **1.40** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **2.45** The Inbetweeners **3.35** Rude Tube **4.25** Revenge **5.10** New Girl

Film4
11.00 Destination Gobi (1953) **1.00** Big Miracle (2012) **3.20** It's a Wonderful Life (1946) **6.10** The Core (2003) **9.00** Transcendence (2014) **11.20** The Babadook (2014) **1.10** Carlos – Part One **3.30** Close

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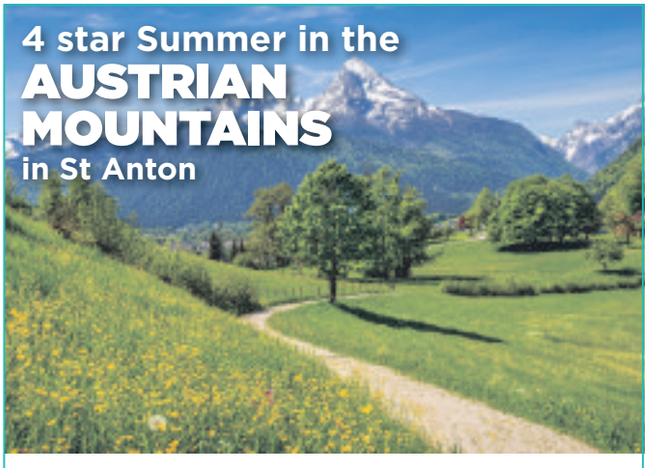

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CHOICE

Gemma Chan

Humans
(Channel 4, 9pm)
Leo investigates the Silo and track down the sniper who shot Ten. Hester promises to use peaceful methods in dealing with the killer, but Leo is not sure his ally can be trusted to keep her word. Mia faces falling into the hands of a mysterious organisation, and Karen makes an admission that rocks her relationship with Pete. Odi tries to find meaning in her life, and Sophie is fascinated by Renie's lifestyle emulating synth behaviour. Sci-fi drama, starring Ritu Arya, Amy Athwal-Kirby, Ivanno Jeremiah, Gemma Chan, Sam Palladio, Eric Kofi Abrefa, Lucy Carless, Katherine Parkinson, Tom Goodman-Hill, Theo Stevenson and Pixie Davies. With Nathalie Armin, Will Tudor, Sonya Cassidy and Colin Morgan.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Alexander Armstrong. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15 Film:** Enchanted. (2007) Fantasy comedy, starring Amy Adams. **2.55** Flog It! (R) **3.35** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.20** Planet Earth II. (R) **5.20** Songs of Praise. **5.55** BBC News.

6.10 Regional Programme.

6.20 Countryfile. The team explores the Brecon Beacons, where Matt Baker finds out about a new kind of treasure hunt and meets an artist inspired by the night sky, while Helen Skelton helps out with sheep trekking and rescuing fish. Sean Fletcher reports on diversification in farming, Adam Henson investigates a treatment for dogs with cancer, and Tom Heap questions how safe horse riders are on the roads. Including weather for the week ahead.

7.20 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present last night's results, and two couples compete in an elimination dance-off.

8.00 Planet Earth II. Footage of animals that live in the desert, including a pride of desert lions that risks hunting a giraffe several times their size. The film also features an immense swarm of locusts, sand grouse flying for 120 miles to gather water for their offspring, and an unprecedented recording of a tiny bat defending itself against one of the world's deadliest scorpions.

9.00 My Mother and Other Strangers. A local child falls seriously ill shortly after Halloween. Dr Black admits that there is only so much he can do, so Rose turns to Captain Dreyfuss for help getting treatment.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, including Arsenal v Bournemouth.

11.50 Sunny D. Dane decides to move out of his parents' house, which means he needs to stay on the right side of his boss, who is determined to seduce him. Katherine Ryan guest stars.

12.15 Citizen Khan. (R) **12.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.45** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **7.45** Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. (R) **8.15** Carol Klein's Plant Odysseys. (R) **8.45** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** International Rugby Union. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Live Snooker: UK Championship. Coverage of the fifth day at the Barbican Centre in York.

6.10 Film: Deep Impact. (1998) A TV reporter investigating a presidential misdemeanour stumbles on evidence that a comet is on a collision course with Earth, threatening the future of the human race. Meanwhile, an astronaut prepares to lead his crew on a do-or-die mission to intercept the danger. Sci-fi drama, starring Robert Duvall, Tea Leoni, Morgan Freeman and Elijah Wood. Edited for daytime broadcast.

8.00 The Mayflower. Drama-documentary exploring the truth behind the story of William Bradford and the Mayflower pilgrims, whose voyage to America in the early 17th century is celebrated in the US every year as Thanksgiving. The programme explores the circumstances that compelled them to leave Europe and the ugly reality behind the famous story of their arrival in the new world.

9.00 Whites v Blacks: How Football Changed a Nation. Adrian Chiles presents the story of a famous football match played in 1979 at West Bromwich Albion, in which a team composed entirely of black players took on an all-white side. The game took place at a time when black people were considered unwelcome in the sport, whether as players, fans or behind the scenes, and for those on the pitch that day, this was a rare and vital opportunity to make their mark on the sport. Adrian reunites players from both teams and reflects on how football has changed in the intervening time.

10.00 Black Is the New Black.

10.30 QI XL. Gyles Brandreth, Victoria Coren Mitchell and Jimmy Carr join series regular Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig in an extended edition of the comedy panel show.

11.15 Snooker: UK Championship.

12.05 Snooker: UK Championship Extra. **2.05** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.00** Holby City. (R) **4.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.25** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.30** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Looped. **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Bear Grylls Survival School. **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) **11.30** Let's Do Christmas with Gino & Mel. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.40** Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) **1.10** The X Factor. (R) **3.00** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.00** Tipping Point. (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.10 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 Off Their Rockers. Kym Marsh reveals her soft spot for Seb, Keith dispenses some career advice, and Dave records a video message for his wife.

7.00 The Next Great Magician. Stephen Mulhern and Rochelle Humes present more spectacular performances, including a magician walking blindfolded through 100 rat traps and a magical surprise for Andrea McLean.

8.00 The X Factor. Dermot O'Leary reveals the results of last night's show, before the lowest scoring acts compete in a sing-off to decide who will be the next to leave the contest.

9.00 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! Ant and Dec present the celebrity survival challenge, as the famous faces continue their ordeal in the Australian jungle, struggling to complete the tough daily tasks and dreaded Bushtucker Trials.

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.45 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with ITV News National Editor Allegra Stratton. (R)

11.45 Premiership Rugby Union. Highlights from the ninth round of fixtures, including Bristol v Leicester Tigers, Harlequins v Bath, Saracens v Gloucester and Exeter Chiefs v Worcester Warriors.

12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Motor Sport: 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship. **6.35** Le Mans Classic. **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Live. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix (Start-time 1.00pm). **4.40** Guy Martin's Wall of Death: Behind the Scenes. (R) **5.40** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun.

6.40 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The Secret Life of the Zoo. Florence and Nadine, two of Chester's Grevy's zebras, are about to give birth, but other animals are struggling to produce offspring, including Iblis the Asiatic lion. Meanwhile, warthog dad Magnum is feeling the pressure of parenting as two of his older children, Dobby and Neville, are becoming increasingly hard to control, and Magnum is losing his hair with the stress. (R)

8.00 Escape to the Chateau. New series. Dick and Angel Strawbridge continue their renovation of a French chateau, 18 months after the end of the first series. So far, only nine rooms have been renovated and many areas of the 12-acre estate have yet to be looked at – but the project is going to have to start paying for itself soon. They make plans to host weddings on the grounds, while looking ahead to keeping livestock and growing their own crops.

9.00 Humans. Leo investigates the Silo and track down the sniper who shot Ten. Hester promises to use peaceful methods in dealing with the killer, but Leo is not sure she can be trusted.

10.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Vic Reeves and Aisling Bea join host Jimmy Carr and team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson for more comic innuendos and unpredictable conundrums in the comedy quiz. (R)

11.05 Jon Richardson: Nidiot. A stand-up performance recorded live in front of a sell-out crowd at the Hammersmith Apollo, in which the comic reaches new levels of frustration. (R)

12.05 The Last Leg. (R) **1.10 Film:** Beyond the Hills. (2012) **3.45** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Highlights. **4.40** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **5.00** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.00** Seaside Antics. (R) **7.05** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.15** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.05** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **8.30** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **8.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.25** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** The Gadget Show. (R) **1.00 Film:** Twelve Trees of Christmas. (2013) Drama, starring Lindy Booth. **2.40 Film:** Once Upon A Christmas. (2015) Romantic drama, starring Tara Wilson. **4.25 Film:** Annie Claus Is Coming to Town. (2011) Christmas fantasy, starring Maria Thayer.

6.10 Film: Santa Who? (2000) Santa Claus loses control of his sleigh in tricky weather conditions and crashes into a passing car – and the resulting bump on the head leads to a total loss of memory. It is left to a youngster to help him beat the amnesia and deliver presents around the world in time for Christmas morning. Family comedy, starring Leslie Nielsen, Max Morrow, Tommy Davidson, Stephen Eckholdt and Robyn Lively. Includes 5 News Update at 7.10pm.

8.00 Ice Road Truckers. Darrell braves the roughest trail remaining on the winter roads, while Art braves another open ice crossing for the first time since his recent close call. Last in the series.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Film: Saving Private Ryan. (1998) In the aftermath of the Normandy landings, a group of American soldiers scours the battlefields of France in search of a missing infantryman, who has been given compassionate leave to return home because his brothers have been killed in the conflict. Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning Second World War drama, starring Tom Hanks, Tom Sizemore, Edward Burns, Matt Damon, Barry Pepper and Vin Diesel. Includes 5 News Update at 10pm.

12.20 Film: Flight of the Phoenix. (2004) **2.15** SuperCasino.

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Virtuoso Violinists at the BBC **8.00** Classic Albums **9.00** World War Two: 1945 & the Wheelchair President **10.30** Storyville: Bride for Sale – Sonita **11.30** FKA twigs **12.00** Monkey Planet **1.00** Tails You Win: The Science of Chance **2.00** Wild Burma: Nature's Lost Kingdom **3.00** Russia – A Century of Suspicion: A Timewatch Guide **4.00** Close

ITV2
11.25 The X Factor **1.10** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **2.15** The Hot Desk: Louisa Johnson **2.30** Catchphrase Celebrity Special **3.30** You've Been Framed! Gold **4.00 Film:** The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) **6.05** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **7.10 Film:** The Waterboy (1998) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15 Film:** The Waterboy (1998) **9.00** The Xtra Factor **10.00** Family Guy **10.30** I'm a Celebrity: Extra Camp **11.30** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.30** The Cleveland Show **2.25** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.05 A Touch of Frost **2.05 Film:** Columbo: A Case of Immunity (1975) **3.45 Film:** Calamity Jane (1953) **4.45** FYI Daily **4.50 Film:** Calamity Jane (1953) **5.50** Inspector Morse **8.00** Lewis **10.00** Midsomer Murders **12.05** Agatha Christie's Marple **2.00** Wycliffe **3.25** May the Best House Win **5.10** You're Only Young Twice **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.50 Cash Cowboys **12.45** Live Darts: Players Championship. The quarter-finals. **5.00** Pawn Stars **7.00** Live Darts: Players Championship. The semi-finals and final. **11.00 Film:** Lock Up (1989) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** Lock Up (1989) **1.10** Fishing Impossible **2.10** Hell on Wheels **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.30 Made in Chelsea **12.30 Film:** Clueless (1995) **2.30** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Salt (2010) **11.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.00** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **1.10** The Inbetweeners **2.10** Crazyhead **3.00** Rude Tube **3.25** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Sahara (1943) **1.00** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **2.45** Carry On Cabby (1963) **4.35** Epic (2013) **6.40** Mission: Impossible 2 (2000) **9.00** Men in Black (1997) **10.50** The Running Man (1987) **12.50** Carlos – Part Two **3.10** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
A Fairytale Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman spends Christmas organising the sale of a mansion and its contents. The aloof owner initially treats her with disdain but they gradually become attracted to each other. However, the budding relationship is complicated when her old flame comes to visit. Romantic drama, starring C Thomas Howell and Haylie Duff. (2013)

TUESDAY
The Cry of the Owl, BBC1, 11.50pm
Troubled Robert moves to the countryside to get over a divorce. He becomes fascinated by an attractive younger woman and the pair begin an illicit relationship, only for Robert to find himself chief suspect in an investigation when her boyfriend goes missing. Thriller, starring Paddy Considine, Julia Stiles, Karl Pruner and James Gilbert. (2009)

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans, Friday, Channel 4, 12.25am

WEDNESDAY
On Strike for Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A hard-working mother wants a perfect family Christmas before her two sons go off to college, but is frustrated when they and her husband offer no help with the preparations. She decides to go on strike and do no more housework for the festive season, inspiring her similarly neglected neighbours to follow suit. Drama, starring Daphne Zuniga. (2010)

THURSDAY
Annie Claus Is Coming to Town, Channel 5, 11.30am
Santa Claus's daughter goes to California in search of adventure, and falls in love with the owner of a traditional toy shop, whose old-fashioned business is struggling to make ends meet. However, a scheming elf tries to drive them apart to further his own ambitions of taking over Christmas. Fantasy, starring Maria Thayer and Sam Page. (2011)

FRIDAY
Underworld: Rise of the Lycans, Channel 4, 12.25am
A werewolf leads a revolution against the vampire king who has enslaved his race, starting a centuries-long war. Fantasy horror prequel, starring Michael Sheen, Bill Nighy and Rhona Mitra. (2009)

PICK OF THE WEEK

New series remembers an infamous case

In 1971, Richard Attenborough starred in the film 10 Rillington Place, and admitted he was haunted by the project and the man he played – John Reginald Christie.

It's a name that still has the power to send shivers down the spine of those who are familiar with his crimes.

Christie was born in West Yorkshire, but in the 1940s and 1950s had settled in London; by this time, he had already been convicted of several crimes, including assaulting a prostitute and stealing a priest's car. On his release from prison, he was reconciled with his estranged wife, Ethel, and they moved to Rillington Place, an address that would become infamous.

This new, three-part drama focuses on a period of 10 years, from 1943 to 1953, when Christie murdered at least eight people, including Ethel. It reveals what happened from three points of view – that of Christie, Ethel and of their tragic neighbour, Timothy Evans.

Evans was a Welshman with an IQ of around 70 who moved into an upper flat at the property with his wife Beryl and toddler daughter Geraldine.

When Beryl fell pregnant again and felt they couldn't cope with another baby, Christie offered to carry out a termination – he claimed to be an experienced backstreet abortionist – but instead administered his own form of 'anaesthetic' before strangling her and Geraldine.

Evans was wrongly convicted for their murders, and hanged in Pentonville Prison in 1950; his carriage is one of Britain's most famous miscarriages of justice, and played a major part in the campaign to abolish capital punishment.

Eventually, after moving out of Rillington Place, Christie was caught after a new tenant discovered the bodies of several of his victims stowed in an alcove near the kitchen. He eventually admitted to killing seven women, but denied the murder of Geraldine; his plea of insanity was rejected during his trial.

"This is a story you just can't look away from: an unlikely serial killer who orchestrated a devastating miscarriage of justice," say the drama's writers, Ed Whitmore and Tracey Malone. "It has drawn us in at every turn and has attracted an incredibly exciting level of talent who are as committed as we are to bringing it to life."

The house where Christie lived was demolished years ago, so filming has largely taken place in Glasgow, with some location shooting in London.

Samantha Morton plays Ethel, while Nico Mirallegro tackles the role of Evans, who was portrayed memorably by John Hurt in the film version, and Jodie Comer, a hot property following her appearance in BBC3's Thirteen takes the part of Beryl.

"This is an incredible cast," claims executive producer Phillippa Giles. "A tribute to the beautiful texture of the scripts."

It's a chilling story, one that is impossible to forget after seeing it depicted on screen. Whether Roth has been disturbed along the same lines as Attenborough was while playing Christie is anybody's guess, but one thing is for sure – it's a tale that will continue to horrify future generations for years to come.

Tim Roth stars in Rillington Place, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Tour de Celeb
Channel 5, 7pm
Forget I'm a Celebrity, this new series might just be the toughest reality show on British TV. It sees a group of famous faces preparing to take on the toughest stage of the Tour de France and cycle 140 kilometres of rugged mountain terrain. The celebs getting on their bikes are reality TV regulars Hugo Taylor and Lucy Mecklenburgh, presenters Angellica Bell and Jodie Kidd, sports stars Darren Gough, Amy Williams and Austin Healey and choreographer Louie Spence. They already seem like a fairly fit bunch, but they won't be expected to just start pedalling, as this first episode follows them as they begin training under the watchful eyes of the coaches, who include Olympic cyclist Rob Hayles and Britain's most successful Paralympian Sarah Storey.

TUESDAY
The Secret Life of 5 Year Olds
Channel 4, 8pm
For the past two weeks we've followed the progress of a group of four-year-old children, but now attention turns to those who are roughly 12 months older. There's a marked difference between the two classes – the first appeared to be mostly shy and unsure of themselves, but this time, the 10 children involved are more confident. They're also concerned with asserting their independence and exploring the adult world around them. It quickly becomes clear that charismatic Jude is the dominant personality, and he even begins a fledgling romance with little Ellie – but their bond is put to the test when they are given a crying, lifelike baby doll to take care of. Meanwhile, nurturing Ellie-May takes Daisy, who has cerebral palsy, under her wing, but it's Daisy who turns out to have the greater imagination and may have the ability to influence how the other children play.

WEDNESDAY
Kids on the Edge: Troubled Girls
Channel 4, 10pm
Teenage years have always been troublesome, but it seems that hormonal issues and puberty aren't the only problems facing youngsters these days. According to a recent report, around one in three English teenage girls show symptoms of anxiety or depression, with A&E departments claiming that they are treating more self-harmers in this age group than ever before. The final episode of Kids on the Edge focuses on two such girls – 17-year-old Demi and Maisie, who is 15. Demi has tried to commit suicide twice, and suffers another crisis during the documentary, but is determined not to end up in a psychiatric unit. Meanwhile, Maisie has been in and out of various units for three years, and she and her mother are pinning all their hopes on help from the Tavistock clinic's staff.

Tour de Celeb, Monday, Channel 5, 7pm

THURSDAY
Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 8pm
Amanda Holden takes part in the popular genealogy documentary, in which famous faces trace their family trees. The actress and presenter looks into the rumoured French ancestry on her mother's side of the family, an investigation that leads to an extraordinary Napoleonic-era cross-Channel romance. But she doesn't stop there. The suicide of her paternal grandfather has always loomed large over her family – and when his story takes her to France once again, she is moved to discover how he helped others through a harrowing tragedy.

FRIDAY
Secrets of Great British Castles
Channel 5, 8pm
Lancaster Castle has witnessed scenes of historical, cultural and political significance throughout the centuries, including incidents of religious persecution, the trials of the Lancashire Witches and 200 public executions. Owned by the Duchy of Lancaster, it was a state prison until 2011 and is still a working crown court. Dan Jones explores its turbulent history and meets Wendy Robinson, a retired prosecutor from Australia, whose ancestors were sentenced to death at Lancaster Crown Court in 1817 for stealing sheep.

Building the World's Most Luxurious Cruise Ship
Channel 5, 9pm
Part one of two. Following engineers and designers as they construct the liner Seven Seas Explorer, aiming to make it the most luxurious ship in the world of its size.

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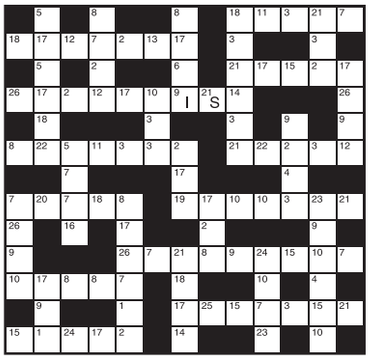
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



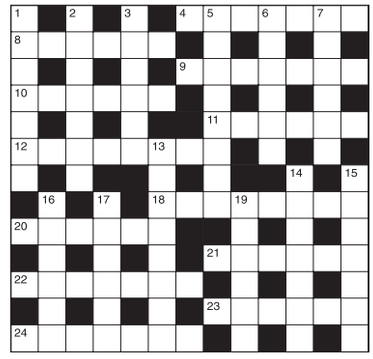
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21 S
9 I	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Q	W	V	P	B	L	O	K	R	D	C	N	A
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Y	E	S	J	T	Z	H	M	U	G	X	I	F

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

4. Its message is a grave one (7)
8. Leave the vehicle burning (6)
9. Establishing a link with carpentry (7)
10. Continually changed course, showing diplomacy, we hear (6)
11. They don't do much to earn their reputation (6)
12. Not a back-cloth used by yachtsmen (8)
18. Wireless user gets a new set in a ship (8)
20. Rather sore, perhaps, on entering (6)
21. Seek food for a long time (6)
22. Put some notes in order? (7)
23. Money-making facility (6)
24. They may be of untold value (7)

Down

1. Mother has a stubborn dog (7)
2. Drop from one's hand (7)
3. He sets out the bed-linen (6)
5. Make professional records as sidelines (8)
6. Thrill to some exciting legends (6)
7. A poor state to be in (6)
13. O.K. there's nothing left (3,5)
14. May as well ring off - or ring on (7)
15. Checks the work of police (7)
16. The way people eat (6)
17. Not just lacking in beauty (6)
19. A capital fellow with a hard-working reputation (6)

Quick Clues:

Across

4. Malady (7)
8. Athlete (6)
9. Accomplish (7)
10. Dale (6)
11. Pour from one vessel to another (6)
12. Inert (8)
18. Universal (8)
20. Treasurer (6)
21. Unimpaired (6)
22. Unlawful (7)
23. Calm (6)
24. Cutting (7)

Down

1. Overcome (7)
2. Soiled (7)
3. Discard (6)
5. Episode (8)
6. Show (6)
7. Economy (6)
13. Augment (8)
14. Flashed (7)
15. Strew (7)
16. Ill-humoured (6)
17. Slumbering (6)
19. Desire for food (6)

Sudoku

		7	6		8		5	
	8	9		5	1			
1	2						8	
				6		8		2
	6	2	5		9			
8		3			4			6
	7						6	9
			7	3		2		
	3		9		5			8

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	8	2	9	5	1	4	3	6
4	3	5	8	7	6	9	2	1
6	9	1	3	4	2	7	5	8
8	2	4	5	1	9	6	7	3
3	1	6	4	2	7	8	9	5
9	5	7	6	8	3	1	4	2
1	6	3	2	9	4	5	8	7
5	7	9	1	3	8	2	6	4
2	4	8	7	6	5	3	1	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Flower stalk; 9 Eye; 10 Downright; 11 Lisle; 13 Refused; 14 Inroad; 16 Estate; 18 Go to pot; 19 Sheaf; 20 Regarding; 21 Tar; 22 Small letter. Down: 2 Lee; 3 Wedge; 4 Reward; 5 Tariffs; 6 Legislate; 7 Bell-ringers; 8 Studies form; 12 Stratagem; 15 Apparel; 17 At will; 19 Sight; 21 Tie. QUICK - Across: 1 Benefaction; 9 Lie; 10 Dismantle; 11 Paper; 13 Tension; 14 Oboist; 16 Triton; 18 Air base; 19 Peril; 20 Immediate; 21 Ass; 22 Recriminate. Down: 2 Ere; 3 Elder; 4 Assets; 5 Trainer; 6 Outfitter; 7 Kleptomania; 8 Meaningless; 12 Programme; 15 Slander; 17 Becalm; 19 Preen; 21 Act.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. Who became potter to George III in 1806?
2. By what name was potassium nitrate formerly known?
3. What was the name of the ferry that sank on the Baltic Sea in 1994?
4. Who was the last Grand Prix world champion to drive a Lotus?
5. Which talent show started Pam Ayres's career?
6. What did Sir Alexander Fleming discover in 1928?
7. To which note does an orchestra tune?
8. What do we call the biennial plant Brassica rapa?
9. Of which constellation is Spica the brightest star?
10. What type of creature is the boomslang?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Joseph Heller; 2 Toronto; 3 Terry Gilliam; 4 Bewitched; 5 Electra complex; 6 Donegal; 7 Jerry Lewis; 8 Malawi; 9 Frederick Delius; 10 Rotary Club.

Niner: CREMATION

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

39124967 gives a deposit,
3287 gives a second deposit,
4533 gives a collection.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Tuck into this special called murgh sara

The Garam Masala, Old Fallow Road, Cannock

Inside the spacious and well-lit dining area

Images by Nakhwal.com

The lamb shank is cooked in a medium sauce

Garam Masala is perfect blend and proves that spice is so nice

IT was perhaps quite fitting that Dua Lipa's hit Hotter Than Hell was playing just as I was served my spicy poppadoms.

As it turned out, they were not THAT fiery, but did fit the description. And they whetted the appetite for what was to come.

Crispy, with a touch of garlic and paprika, it was the first time anywhere I had seen them as an option, though owner Maj Miah informs us the traditional variety remain the most popular. Of the accompanying dips, the sweet pickle option, with its ingredients including tamarin, mango chutney and coriander is to die for.

Maj has built up a successful enterprise at the Garam Masala, the former Central pub, in Old Fallow Road. Having cut his teeth at the existing Dilraj, in Wednesfield,

MARK SHIPP tucks in

Maj was looking for bigger premises to expand his empire.

He hasn't looked back as next year marks the 10th anniversary since being opened by Wolves legend Steve Bull. Maj is rightly proud of its success, particularly as competition is strong with a plethora of Indian restaurants just up the road.

"We were looking to offer something different to what was already out there and this was the ideal place for us to do that," said Maj, whose kitchen staff have remained in situ since the restaurant's opening.

The Garam Masal has 126 covers with a function room upstairs, ideal for party bookings, which are popular, or for family dining which it prides itself on. Its choice of up-to-date tunes give it that modern, trendy feel and enables us 40-somethings to stay in the loop. It has a Five-Star RateMyPlate classification and is clean and fresh inside, while subtle changes are often made to the decor and the menu, but not at the expense of alienating customers.The fact it doubles up by serving Cantonese food is a bonus.

Fusion

Even better for my family and I, it's just a steady stroll away, although customers are said to frequent from Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley and even Stafford. The fare is healthy and there are vegetarian options to go with the traditional offerings, chef's specials and fusion dishes.

Among the most popular dishes, Maj informs me, are sylhet balti and the clay pot chicken. There is a clear interaction between staff and customers and the waiters are on hand for advice, particularly in my case as I looked to feast on fish. I was told my choice of rupchanda pomfret was dry and came on the bone, so a mass platter was suggested instead.

I skipped the prawns, but the meaty salmon and monkfish, cooked in herbs and spices with a hint of garlic, was delicious.

Guest number one opted for the murgh makhani, with mushroom pilau – well received – while the younger guest chose his favourite, chicken tikka masala. Desserts followed, and there was a quirky selection, including a Bollywood kulfi, served in a pot which resembles a film reel Oscar statue base and a Turkish Delight-style cheesecake. We opted though, for a strawberry and vanilla sundae.

Garam Masala is open every day from 5.30pm. Bookings are now being taken for its three-course Christmas Day menu, Indian or English option, at £24.95 for adults and £12.95 for children. Call 01543 502006.

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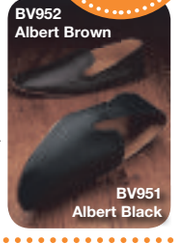
BV933 Mule Brown (leather lined)


BV952 Albert Brown
BV951 Albert Black

BV955 Grecian Brown
BV954 Grecian Black

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				TOTAL	

PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Three-bedroom home is ideal for a growing family

This charming three-bedroomed semi-detached property in Church Hill, Wednesbury, Sandwell is ideal for family living.

It is for sale through Goodchilds at offers in excess of £150,000.

Its accommodation briefly comprises a porch, an entrance hall, three bedrooms, a family bathroom, a living room, a kitchen/diner and a rear garden. The property also benefits from off road parking.

In more detail the entrance hall has stairs off to the first floor and doors off to the remaining ground floor accommodation.

The kitchen/diner overlooks the rear and has a range of attractive modern white wall and base units with contrasting dark coloured working surfaces over, a stainless steel sink and drainer with a mixer tap over, an integrated oven and gas hob with a stainless steel hood over and French doors leading to the garden. This room includes attractive black floor tiles.

Off the first floor landing the master bedroom has a bay window to the front. Bedroom two has a window overlooking the property's rear garden and built-in wardrobes. Bedroom three also has views over the front of the house.

The family bathroom is positioned to the rear of the property. Its modern suite includes a P-shaped panel bath with a shower over and a curved shower screen, a low level WC, pedestal hand wash basin, a heated towel rail and complementary tiling.

Goodchilds Estate Agents & Lettings is a relatively young but dynamic company, having been established since 1994 as Goodchilds Property Investments offering affordable rental properties into the residential market.

A spokesman said: "We are extremely proud to have established our business as both a leading estate and residential lettings agency built by consistently exceeding client expectations.

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KEY FEATURES

- Semi-detached
- 3 bedrooms
- Double glazing
- Gas central heating
- Rear garden

WEDNESBURY £150,000

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MOST SALES

Charming house with a stunning kitchen/diner

WEDNESBURY
£150,000

A charming three-bedroomed semi-detached home in Church Hill, Wednesbury, includes a stunning kitchen/diner.

Also with a multi fuel burner in the lounge, it is for sale through Goodchilds at offers over £150,000.

With double glazing, central heating and off road parking, its accommodation comprises entrance hall, living room, a kitchen/diner, a master bedroom and two further bedrooms.

The bathroom has a contemporary suite with a bath with a shower over, WC and wash hand basin.

For further information or to arrange that all important viewing, contact Goodchilds on 01902 267111 or visit the site www.goodchilds-uk.com

Spacious end terrace has three double bedrooms

WEDNESBURY
£135,000 <<<

This spacious end of terrace home in Corporation Street, Wednesbury comes with three double bedrooms.

It is for sale through Goodchilds at £135,000.

It has an entrance hallway, a downstairs wet room, a kitchen, a dining room, a living room, a three double bedrooms and a family bathroom.

The property benefits double glazing and gas central heating.

In more detail the downstairs wet room has tiled walls, a shower, hand basin and low flush WC.

The kitchen has wall and base units, roll edge working surface and tiled splash-back areas.

For further information contact Goodchilds on 0844 800 9404 or visit www.goodchilds-uk.com

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51 Peakhouse Road, Great Barr
4 Bedroom Semi Detached House
Guide: £94,000-£99,000

115 Mansion Crescent, Smethwick
3 Bedroom Mid Terraced House
Guide: £50,000 plus

82 Baltimore Road, Great Barr
2 Bedroom End Terraced House
Guide: £78,000-£82,000

34 Berkshire Crescent, Wednesbury
2 Bedroom Semi Detached House
Guide: £55,000 plus

59 Hembs Crescent, Great Barr
3 Bedroom Semi Detached House
Guide: £39,000-£44,000

Flat 12 Warley Court, Moat Road, Oldbury
2 Bedroom 2nd Floor Apartment
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at Aston Villa Football Ground

View: Mon 28 Nov 9:45 & Sat 3 Dec 10:30

59 Hembs Crescent, Great Barr
A Vacant Leasehold Semi Detached House with the Benefit of Garage and Majority UPVC Double Glazing however, the Property is in Need of Modernisation/ Improvements Throughout
Guide: £39,000-£44,000

View Mon 28 Nov 14:45 & Sat 3 Dec 15:30

4 Sutherland Road, Goldthorn, Wolverhampton
A Vacant Freehold 4 Bedroom Detached House with the Benefit of Central Heating however, is in Need of Modernisation Throughout
Guide: £99,000 plus

View Sat 26 Nov 12:15 & Mon 28 Nov 12:15

125 Fraser St, Wolverhampton
2 Bed Mid Terraced House
Guide: £19,000-£24,000

View Sat 26 Nov 13:00 & Mon 28 Nov 13:00

48 Castle View, Wolverhampton
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £29,000-£34,000

View Mon 28 Nov 10:45 & Sat 3 Dec 11:30

24 Dawson Street, Walsall
A Vacant Freehold 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Property, with the Benefit of Central Heating, which May Have Development Potential, Subject to Obtaining the Necessary Planning
Guide: £19,000-£24,000

View Sat 26 Nov 10:45 & Mon 28 Nov 10:45

42 John Street, Bilston
3 Bed End Terraced House
Guide: £39,000-£44,000

View Mon 28 Nov 12:30 & Sat 3 Dec 13:15

40 Sandon Rd, Wolverhampton
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus

View Sat 26 Nov 11:30 & Mon 28 Nov 11:30

10 Chillington Place, Wolverhampton
2 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £29,000-£34,000

View By Appointment

115 Mansion Crescent, Smethwick
3 Bed Mid Terraced House
Guide: £50,000 plus

View Sat 26 Nov 10:00 & Mon 28 Nov 10:00

153 Parkfield Rd, Wolverhampton
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus

View Sat 26 Nov 14:45 & Mon 28 Nov 16:15

27 Leys Road, Brierley Hill
3 Bed Mid Terraced House
Guide: £19,000-£24,000

View Mon 28 Nov 11:45 & Sat 3 Dec 12:30

5 Perry Avenue, Wolverhampton
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £29,000 - £34,000

View Sat 26 Nov 13:45 & Mon 28 Nov 14:30

34 Lindley Avenue, Tipton
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus

View Mon 28 Nov 15:30 & Sat 3 Dec 14:45

45 Helming Drive, Wolverhampton
2 Bedroom Bungalow
Guide: £39,000-£44,000

View Mon 28 Nov 13:15 & Sat 3 Dec 14:00

186 Waterloo Rd, Wolverhampton
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus

INVESTMENT View By Appointment

9 Bristol Street, Wolverhampton
2 Bedsits & 1 Flat Investment
Current Gross Income: £14,400 pa
Guide: £29,000-£34,000

INVESTMENT View By Appointment

14 Bay Avenue, Wolverhampton
1 Bed Residential Investment
Current Gross Income: £5,400 pa
Guide: £19,000 - £24,000

FURTHER VIEWINGS TIMES AVAILABLE. PLEASE CONTACT US ON 0121 233 5046 FOR FURTHER DETAILS

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Three-storey home has been improved

WEDNESBURY

£175,000

A recently improved and hugely versatile modern family home in Friar Park Road, Wednesday, has spacious accommodation over three floors.

It is for sale through Paul Dubberley at £175,000 with no chain.

The property features four bedrooms (two with en-suites), a good size lounge, a contemporary style kitchen, a dining room, study (possible fifth bedroom), a family bathroom and a guest WC, gas central heating and majority double glazed.

Externally, there is a driveway, garage and a smartly presented rear garden. Viewing is strongly advised.

The rear garden is enclosed and has a timber deck patio and decorative borders.

Contact Paul Dubberley on 0121 5053533.

Spacious and lovely modern three-storey town house

TIPTON

£179,950 <<<

This lovely modern three-storey town house in Horseley Heath, Tipton, comes with four bedrooms.

It is for sale through Paul Dubberley at £179,950.

With double glazing, gas central heating, the large family accommodation briefly comprises a reception hall, lounge/dining room, fitted breakfast kitchen, utility room, four bedrooms, master with en suite and a bedroom with a Jack & Jill en-suite and a family bathroom.

There is also a garage to the rear and a rear garden.

The selling agents are expecting the sale of this property to attract a lot of interest, so would-be buyers are being urged to act fast.

For further information, or to book that all important viewing, please contact Paul Dubberley on 0121 5223733 or visit the website www.pauldubberley.co.uk

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passionate about property

Cape Hill
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CYBER MONDAY

18th November
12th December OFFER

£500 DISCOUNT ON FEE
(subject to Terms & Conditions)

Make your property stand out at one of the busiest online times of the year. If one of your goals for next year is moving home, be proactive now and don't delay in getting in touch with us to see how we can get your property sold.

Forster Street, SMETHWICK

Five Double Bedrooms! Three Reception Rooms! Fitted Kitchen! Family Bathroom! Two Shower Rooms! Cloakroom! Offering double glazing and central heating and gardens to front and rear. Viewing is highly recommended!

Offers Around £229,950

Corbett Street, SMETHWICK

Mid terraced property comprising, hallway, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, ground floor bathroom, three bedrooms, double glazed and centrally heated where specified, rear garden. Close to shops, schools etc.

Offers Around £114,950

Sycamore Road, SMETHWICK

Spacious terraced property with accommodation briefly comprising, hallway, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, three bedrooms, upstairs bathroom, double glazed and centrally heated, front and rear gardens.

Offers Around £155,000

Pheasant Road, BEARWOOD

Family home within walking distance to Warley Woods Comprising a porch, two reception rooms, extended kitchen/Diner, utility room, cloakroom, four bedrooms (master en suite), refitted family bathroom, front driveway, rear garden, garage

Offers Around £289,950

Corbett Street, SMETHWICK

Terraced property with accommodation briefly comprising, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, family bathroom, three bedrooms, loft room, rear garden, double glazed and centrally heated, close to shops, schools etc.

Offers Around £124,950

Cape Hill, SMETHWICK

Second floor modern apartment comprising, hallway, two bedrooms (master en-suite), bathroom, open plan living/kitchen/dining, fitted kitchen, balcony, D/G and C/H, communal grounds, allocated parking.

Offers Around £104,950

Offices at:
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SIMILAR PROPERTIES REQUIRED!

Tipton
Queens Road

- New Build!
- Three bedrooms
- Master bedroom with ensuite
- Gas/CH & D/glazed
- Newly fitted carpets
- Kitchen with appliances
- Off road parking

£695pcm

SIMILAR PROPERTIES REQUIRED!

Tipton
Monins Avenue

- Freshly decorated
- D/glazed & Gas/CH
- Breakfast kitchen
- Three bedrooms
- Private garden
- Bathroom with shower

£625pcm

Wednesbury
Price Road

- Three bed semi
- Gas/CH and D/glazing
- Fitted kitchen
- Family bathroom
- Security alarm system
- Rear garden

£625pcm

Tividale
Clun Close

- Three bedrooms
- Ideal for commuters!
- Part furnished
- D/glazed
- Kitchen with appliances
- Family bathroom with shower

£550pcm

Tipton
Ferguson Drive

- Two bedroom apartment
- First floor
- Breakfast kitchen
- Bathroom
- Two allocated parking spaces

£475pcm

TENANTS!

OUR APPLICATION FEES ARE ONLY
£180 inc. VAT
FOR UP TO THREE APPLICANTS
*£50.00 PER ADDITIONAL APPLICANT

INCLUDES:
- Credit Checks -
Inventory - First Lease

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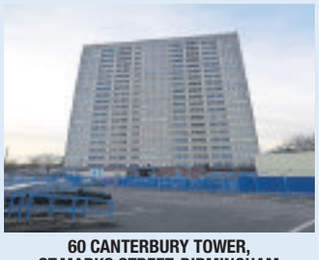
22 TURTON ROAD, WEST BROMWICH



60 CANTERBURY TOWER, ST.MARKS STREET, BIRMINGHAM

19 NIGEL ROAD, DUDLEY

48 COURTNEY, ST. CECILIA CLOSE, KIDDERMINSTER

119 SYCAMORE ROAD, SMETHWICK

165 COOMBES LANE, LONGBRIDGE

103 THUNDERBOLT WAY, TIPTON

Wednesbury
0121 5067670
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Bloomfield Road,Tipton

- ●●Goodchilds●●●
- End Terraced
- Four Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Double Glazed
- Gas Central Heating

Offers in the region of £199,950

Church Hill,Wednesbury

- ●●Goodchilds●●
- Semi Detached
- Three Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Kitchen/Diner
- Family Bathroom
- Rear Garden
- Off Road Parking

Offers in the Region Of £155,000

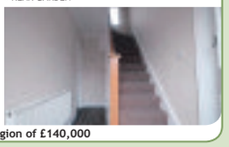
King Street,Wednesbury

- ●●Goodchilds●●
- Terraced
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Downstairs W.C
- Kitchen/Diner

Offers in the region of £145,000

Neptune Street,Tipton

- DETACHED PROPERTY
- TWO BEDROOMS
- TWO RECEPTION ROOMS
- RECENTLY RE-FURBISHED
- DOUBLE GLAZED
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- FAMILY BATHROOM
- REAR GARDEN



Offers in the region of £140,000

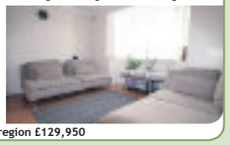
Corporation Street,Wednesbury

- ●●Goodchilds●●
- three Double Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Dining Room
- Downstairs Wet Room
- Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Enclosed Rear Garden

Offers in the Region Of £135,000

Stanbury Avenue,Wednesbury

- End terraced property
- Three spacious bedrooms
- Two reception rooms
- Family bathroom
- Downstairs WC
- Plentiful storage space
- Garage
- Double glazed and gas central heating



Offers in the region £129,950

Coles Lane,West Bromwich

- ●●Goodchilds●●
- Two Bedroom
- Semi Detached
- Living room
- Downstairs Shower Room
- Extended kitchen/diner

Offers In The Region Of £124,950

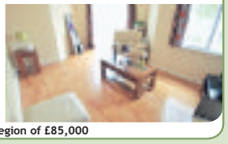
Moor Street,Wednesbury

- Ideal for any first time buyer or investor
- New UPVC double glazing
- Decked area to rear garden
- Quiet location
- Close to local amenities
- Perfect for access to Birmingham
- Downstairs WC
- Generous storage space

Offers In The Region Of £100,000

Brookside,Wednesbury

- Ground Floor Apartment
- Two Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Kitchen With Breakfast Area
- Family Bathroom
- Double Glazed
- Allocated Parking
- Must View



Offers in the region of £85,000

Princess Grove,West Bromwich

- Upper Floor Maisonete
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Family Bathroom
- Two Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Must View
- NO CHAIN

Offers In The Region Of £80,000

St Christopher Drive,Wednesbury

- Three Bedrooms
- Garage
- Off Road Parking
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Semi Detached
- Well Presented
- Modern Throughout

Offers in Excess of £140,000

Michael Road,Wednesbury

- ●●Goodchilds●●
- End Of Terraced
- Three Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Kitchen
- Rear Garden
- Off Road Parking
- In Need Of Work

Offers in the Region Of £85,000

Brookside,Wednesbury

- Ground Floor Apartment
- Two Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Kitchen With Breakfast Area
- Family Bathroom
- Double Glazed
- Allocated Parking
- Must View

Offers in the Region Of £85,000

Churchfield Avenue,Tipton

- ●●Goodchilds●●
- Three Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Bathroom
- Kitchen
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Rear Parking

Offers in the Excess of £45,000

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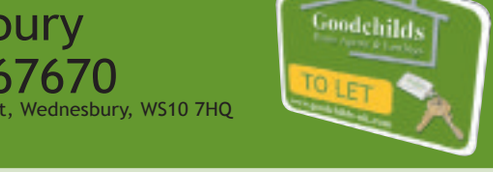
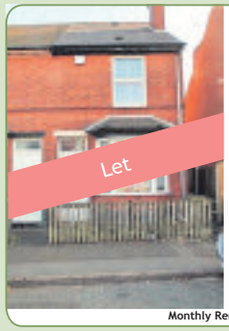


Station Street,Wednesbury

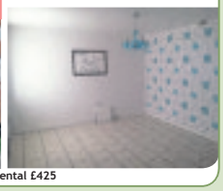
- Two Bedroom Mid Terraced
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Front Garden and Rear Gardens
- Upstairs Family Bathroom
- Deposit on application
- Available Now!
- DHSS CONSIDERED



Monthly Rental £425

Hurstcroft Road,Birmingham

- Hallway
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Two Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Recently Decorated
- Available immediately
- DHSS Accepted



Monthly Rental £425

Vicarage Road,Wednesbury

- Entrance Hall
- Lounge
- Kitchen / Diner
- Modern Bathroom
- Three Bedrooms
- Modern Bathrooms

Monthly Rental £550

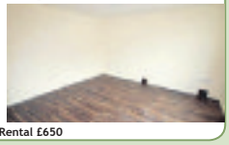
Elizabeth Walk,Tipton

- AVAILABLE NOW!
- Ground floor two bedroom flat
- Recently Refurbished
- Doulble Glazing
- Gas central heating
- New fitted kitchen
- New fitted Bathroom
- DHSS CONSIDERED

Monthly Rental £450

Coronation Road,Tipton

- Newly Refurbished
- Three Bedroom semi detached
- Off road parking
- Double Glazing
- Gas central heating
- Downstairs toilet
- Family Bathroom
- Rear garden



Monthly Rental £650

Dick Sheppard Avenue,Tipton

- Four Bedroom New build property
- Gas central heating
- Double Glazing
- Large rear garden
- Driveway
- Fitted Kitchen
- Fitted Bathroom
- En suite

Monthly Rental £725

Wilkinson Road,Wednesbury

- Threed Bed semi detached
- Large rear garden
- Dining Room
- Double Glazing
- Gas central heating
- Available immediately

Monthly Rental £550

Dangerfield Lane,Wednesbury

- Two Bedroom Semi detached property
- Gas central heating
- Double Glazing
- Off road parking
- Front and Rear garden
- Available now
- Downstairs WC
- DHSS CONSIDERED

Monthly Rental £495

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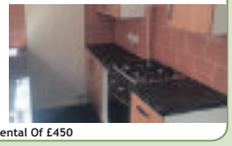
Addenbrooke Street,Wednesbury

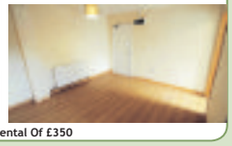
- Three Bedroomed Property
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Bathroom
- Fitted Kitchen
- Rear Garden
- DHSS Accepted
- Must view!



Monthly Rental Of £450

Princes end High Street,Tipton

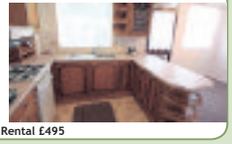
- Two Bedroom First Floor Flat
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Fully Fitted Kitchen
- Open Plan Kitchen/Diner
- DHSS ACCEPTED
- Deposit Required
- £90 Process Fee (Per Person)



Monthly Rental Of £350

High Street,Wednesbury

- Three Bedroom Mid Terraced
- Fitted Kitchen
- Fitted Bahtroom
- Rear Garden
- Double Glazing
- Off road parking
- Great transport links
- SORRY NO DHSS



Monthly Rental £495

Talbot House,West Midlands

- One Bedroom upper Floor Flat
- Great Transport Links
- Fitted Kitchen
- Newly Decorated
- Electric Heating
- DHSS Accepted
- Town center location
- Available now!

Monthly rental of £300

Wiley Road South,Wednesbury

- Two Bedroom Apartment
- New Build First Floor
- Communal Entrance/Stairs
- Hallway
- Lounge/Kitchen
- Bathroom with Shower Over
- Double Glazing
- Electric Heating

Monthly Rental Of £475

The Shambles,Wednesbury

- One Bedroom Flat
- Secure entrance
- Double Glazing
- Electric heating
- Town center location
- Great transport links
- Available now!
- Dhss accepted

Monthly Rental £350

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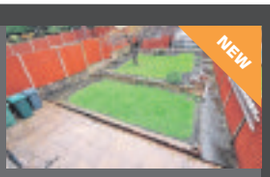
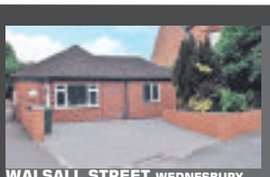


WALSALL ROAD WEST BROMWICH
- A well presented semi-detached house
- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge
- Kitchen/Diner
- Lean to
- Bathroom and separate WC
- Driveway
- Rear Garden

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £134,950



WALSALL STREET WEDNESBURY
- Modern Detached Bungalow
- Two Bedrooms
- Lounge/Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Driveway to Front
- Rear Garden
- Utility Cupboard

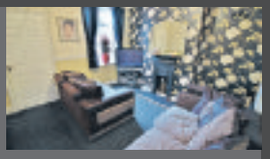
OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £150,000

RACHAEL GARDENS WEDNESBURY
- Semi-detached house
- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge
- Kitchen/Diner
- Bathroom
- Off-road parking
- Rear Garden
- No upward Chain

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £154,950

BUSTLEHOLME LANE WEST BROMWICH
- Detached bungalow
- Two bedrooms
- Lounge & dining room
- Kitchen & Utility
- Bathroom
- Large rear garden
- Off-road parking
- No Chain

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £254,995



VICARAGE ROAD WEDNESBURY
- A well presented Terraced house
- Three Double Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Kitchen
- Downstairs Bathroom
- Rear Garden
- Gas central heating & uPVC double glazing (Where specified)
- Viewing essential

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £105,000

OAKESWELL STREET WEDNESBURY
- Detached Family Home
- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge & Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Utility/Lean to
- Family Bathroom
- Large Rear Garden
- Garage

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £138,500

JULIA GARDENS WEST BROMWICH
- Semi-Detached family home
- Three Bedrooms
- Kitchen
- Lounge & Dining Room
- Bathroom
- Off-road parking
- Rear Garden
- Internal viewing advised

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £170,000

GREENWOOD ROAD WEST BROMWICH
- Well presented family home • Great transport links
- Local to schools and amenities • Three good size bedrooms
- Gas central heated • uPVC double glazed

£128,000 OFFERS

HARDY ROAD WEDNESBURY
- Detached Family Home • Three Bedrooms
- Lounge/Dining Room • Kitchen
- Bathroom • Garage
- Rear garden • No Upward Chain

£175,000 OFFERS

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SHELTON CLOSE WEDNESBURY
- Lovely Cul-de-sac location • Link Detached house
- Three Bedrooms • Lounge
- Kitchen/Dining Room • Bathroom
- uPVC double glazing and gas central heating throughout •

£145,000 OFFERS

CRANKHALL LANE WEDNESBURY
- Semi-detached house • Three bedrooms
- Lounge • Kitchen
- Veranda • Off road parking
- Rear Garden • No Upward chain

£119,950 OFFERS

SCHOOL ROAD WEDNESBURY
- Three bedroom end of terraced house set on this large corner plot.
- Potential to extend (subject to planning permission)
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Detached garage
- Shower room
- Garden to front, side and rear.
- Early viewing advised.

£110,000 OFFERS

DURHAM ROAD WEDNESBURY
- Semi detached house on popular woods development
- Two bedrooms
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Conservatory
- Bathroom
- Rear Garden
- Off-road parking

£116,950 OFFERS

ROOTH STREET WEDNESBURY
- Characterful Mid-terraced house
- Three Bedrooms
- Spacious Bathroom
- Loft Room (Potential 4th Bedroom)
- Two living rooms and dining room
- Large Kitchen and utility
- Lovely Rear Garden
- Cellar

£225,000 OFFERS

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Shrubbery Avenue, Tipton, DY4 Tipton

- Lovely Traditional Detached Family Home
- Excellent Wide Frontage Position
- Gas Central Heating ● Most Windows UPVc Double Glazed
- Reception hall ● Guest Cloakroom
- Lounge ● Sitting Room / Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- 3 Bedrooms ● Bathroom
- Detached Garage ● Side garden ● Additional Enclosed Yard,

Viewing

OFFERS AROUND: £169,995

Brookfield Way Tipton

- Modern Semi Detached
- UPVC Double Glazing & Electric Heating
- Viewing Recommended
- EPC Rating F
- Lounge / Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- 3 Bedrooms ● Family Bathroom
- Side Garage ● Rear Garden, Reception hall

Viewing

OFFERS AROUND: £134,000

Mill Street, Tipton, DY4 Tipton

- Brand New Home
- The Anker / The Bourne Design
- Semi Detached ● Detached
- Help To Buy Available,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £169,995

Middle Meadow, Tipton, DY4

- Investment Opportunity
- Tenant On Fixed 6 Month Contract £400 PCM
- Upvc Double Glazing ● Gas Central Heating
- Modern First Floor Apartment,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £78,000

Bell Street, Tipton, DY4 Tipton

- Modern Purpose Built First Floor Apartment
- Upvc Double Glazing ● Central Heating
- No Upward Chain
- Open Plan Lounge / Fitted Kitchen
- 2 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Resident Parking
- EPC Rating B,

Viewing

OFFERS AROUND: £55,000

Monins Avenue Tipton

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Viewing

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- Semi Detached Family Home
- Good Size Accommodation
- Upvc Double Glazing ● Gas Central Heating
- Porch ● Reception Hall,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £164,950

Wrens Hill Road, Dudley, DY1

- Semi Detached Home
- Ideal First Time Purchase or Buy To Let
- Upvc Windows ● Gas Central Heating
- Reception Hall,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £105,950

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Longcroft Avenue, Wednesbury, WS10

- Modern Style Detached Residence
- Three Bedrooms & Family Bathroom
- Contemporary Style Kitchen
- Through Lounge Incorporating Dining Area,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £170,000

Phoenix Rise, Wednesbury, WS10

- Modern Style Mid Terrace Property
- Two Bedrooms & First Floor Bathroom
- Lounge & Contemporary Style Kitchen
- Double Glazed As Stated,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £95,000

Burrs Drive, Wednesbury, WS10

- Modern Upper Floor Flat
- Two Bedrooms & Bathroom
- Spacious Lounge With Dining Space
- Contemporary Style Kitchen,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £85,000

Cope Street, Wednesbury, WS10

- Double Fronted Terrace Residence
- Three bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Kitchen,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £95,000

Shaftesbury Road, Wednesbury, WS10

- Traditional Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms & Bathroom
- Two Reception Rooms & Kitchen
- Gas Central Heating System,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £140,000

Delville Close, Wednesbury, WS10

- Ground Floor Maisonette
- One Double Bedroom
- Lounge & Kitchen
- Shower Room,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £60,000

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- Well Presented Semi Detached Home
- Three Bedrooms & Modern Bathroom
- Spacious Lounge
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Viewing

OFFERS AROUND: £129,950

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OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £204,995

Wordsworth Street West Bromwich

- End Terrace
- 3 Bedrooms
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- , Extended Kitchen

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £110,000

Essex Avenue, West Bromwich, B71

- Mid terraced house
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- Very Well Presented
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- Downstairs Bathroom,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £169,950

The Broadway, West Bromwich, B71 NEW

- Semi-Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
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OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £145,000

Coles Lane, West Bromwich, B71 NEW

- Traditional Semi-Detached House
- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge
- Upstairs Family Bathroom,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £119,950

Witton Lane, West Bromwich, B71

- End terraced property
- 3 Bedrooms
- Lounge
- Large kitchen,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £115,000

Harvills Hawthorn, West Bromwich, B70

- Mid terraced
- Three bedrooms
- Two reception rooms
- Kitchen,

OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: £120,000

Church Vale, West Bromwich, B71

- Upper floor Maisonette
- 2 Bedrooms
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- Kitchen,

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TARA, 35yrs, own business, well educated dark haired curvy lady. Independent with no ties seeks "normal" chap for mutual pleasure. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 424385**

CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told)! Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424783**

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BARBARA, 36, slim blonde, likes music, sport, the outdoors, quiet nights in etc, WLTM kind honest gent to share interests and get to know me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424549**

BABS, single mum looking for adult companionship, any age/looks or status. Interested? Come on over to my place. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424253**

HELEN, mid 50's naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424493**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424495**

JULIE, 53yrs, tall, slim, dark haired lady, sociable and fun loving, new to the area so WLTM men friends for fun, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424497**

SEXY brunette 39, petite, brown eyes, seeks energetic discreet guy for no strings fun and friendship. Age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424451**

CALL or text me, I'm Claire, single, 41yrs loves life to the full, hoping you will contact me if you want a genuine fun time. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424779**

SARAH, 39yrs, married, seeking chap for no strings intimate times. Special friendship, mutual respect. Give me a call. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 408291**

JOSIE, sexy black lady, 52yrs seeks adult times with concerning gent, any age, discreet clean, womanly figure. **Text only Mailbox: 4028592**

SARAH, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424777**

ANNABELLE, sophisticated 28yrs hoping to meet older gent for adult fun, discreet, sincere, genuine advertiser. **Text only Mailbox: 4157105**

JANE 40's, blonde blue eyed petite build, WLTM understanding discreet tall, caring man for daytime meets. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424769**

ANDREA, 43, slim with long dark hair, blue eyes, loves to dance seeks romantic man to share intimate moments in or out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424747**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424675**

SUE, attractive genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424673**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady young looking 60,Âôs, genuine and kind seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424671**

FEMALE 50, seeks male of similar age for friendship, possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 350529**

JOY attractive Asian female 37, loves to dance, looking for older English gent to teach me some new steps, fall in love with, spoil, pamper and make feel very special. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424255**

WENDY, 44yrs, dark haired beauty with blue eyes and a fab figure. WLTM gent any age, give me a call and I promise to call you back, or text/email. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424339**

RENATA, 55, slim, attractive lady with long auburn hair just wants to have a good time with likeminded older guy up to 75yrs. Looks/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424263**

LOUISE, 40, elegant genuine blonde who's been hurt in the past seeks tall handsome male to be her Mr Right. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424261**

HEATHER, 48, well travelled solvent brunette looking to share a large glass of wine and whatever follows with affectionate man friend. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424429**

TERRI, attractive young looking 29yrs, long legged sporty seeking nice man to fall in love with, up to 45yrs. If that's you pls call, you have nothing to lose. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424377**

SUSAN, 43, pretty green eyed brunette looking for an interesting attractive man who would understand my wicked sense of humour. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424381**

Single Men

WIDOWER, 60s, GSOH, n/s, likes places of interest, country walks, cats and dogs, music, theatre and cinema, still looking for a lady, around 55-65, for companionship, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424709**

ATTRACTIVE, tall, dark, professional male, 50, GSOH, easygoing, enjoys sport, socialising, good company, looking to meet attractive female for fun, adventure and take things from there. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424563**

YOUNG 70 widower, fit, lonely, 5ft 11ins, 11st, likes drives, walks, DIY, meals out, gardening, smoker, looking for lady to spend life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424687**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424685**

MALE 50 seeks mature, homeloving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424683**

MALE, mid 60s, honest person, lots of interests, looking for a lady, 45-65, to share the good times with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424321**

IAN, 5ft8, medium build, ohoc, late 50s, likes most things, holidays, gardening, motorbikes, wltm similar aged lady, 50-60, with nice personality. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421345**

TALL, 63 year old male, seeking n/s female, 45+, for hassle free fun times, in the Wolverhampton and surrounding areas. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424291**

CHRISTIAN male 51, seeking Christian female, 35-45 for friendship, possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423747**

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

ANY mature women over 60 seeking adult fun - this attractive male 58 will cater for your needs, any size or status. **Text only. Mailbox: 5410860**

MALE, 59, 5ft2, dark hair, looking for a lady, 50-60, to share the good things in life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424759**

MALE, 59, 5ft2, looking for genuine lady, 50-55, to share the good things in life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424353**

TIM, young at heart, intelligent, fun loving, spontaneous, GSOH, WLTM a lady with a GSOH, for friendship and possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424395**

ATTRACTIVE, Tall and intelligent Black male 50, lover of animals and nature seeks solvent lady of quality 50+ for romance. **Text only Mailbox: 5561456**

47 year old guy, 5ft7, dark hair, blue eyes, likes DVDs, nights in and out, seeks female, 42-49, in Leamington Spa/Rugby area, for friendship and long term relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424325**

ANDY, single, 53, looking for a mature, sexy lady, age/looks unimportant, for fun and adventure. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422893**

NICE old fashioned gent, seeks kind, caring romantic lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416905**

JAY, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

STEVE, 53yr old male, laid back, likes most things in life, seeks female 40-50, for evenings out, need some TLC in my life. **Text only Mailbox: 4362854**

MALE, 44, very interesting person, own business, sporty, honest and genuine, likes nights out, meals out, cinema, country walks, WLTM a lady for friendship and good company leading to a permanent relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420841**

WHITE curvy lady any age, required by handsome black professional male, for discreet casual adult fun. No time wasters pls. **Text only Mailbox: 5066605**

ROB, 63, 6ft, slim, own hair own teeth, young at heart, considered good looking, ohoc, solvent, so get back if you're interested. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424027**

HELLO I am an easy going chap and I WLTM a lady, 55-65 for a permanent relationship, so please get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424131**

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424681**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424679**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424677**

MALE 57, attractive, seeks mature woman any age for close fun, married or single. **Text only Mailbox: 5410860**

BLACK male, ex-marine, 6ft1, would like to meet a lady, 30 or over, if you would like a night in or out, Birmingham area, give me a shout. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424507**

ADVENTUROUS 36 year old male, slim, dark hair, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

GENT 48, youthful outlook, likes countryside, keep fit, karaoke, seeks soul mate for fun times. N Shropshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408411**

IAN, GSOH, 60, looking for somebody to go out with and have a good time, a good laugh, maybe things will move on, I'm young at heart so looking for younger female if possible, NSA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424357**

RETIRED male seeking companionship maybe more. No time wasters. **Text only Mailbox: 5542315**

ITALIAN male, 46, from Oldbury, seeking female, 30-50, for friendship, possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424371**

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what's on

christmas events

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
ST MICHAELS RC CHURCH
High Street, West Bromwich
Saturday, November 26.
11am - Admission 20p
children free.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
At The Good Shepherd with St. John,
Lyttleton Street,
West Bromwich
Saturday, November 26, at 2pm.
Bric-a-brac, raffle, Christmas Hamper, toys, books, etc.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
Saturday, November 26
12-2pm in St Peter's Church Hall, White Hall Road West Bromwich.
Childrens lucky dip, turkey and stuffing sandwiches, many other stalls. **Admission 20p.**

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISSI
Freeman Road, Friar Park, Wednesbury.
Saturday, November 26.
11am - 2pm.
Various stalls.
Admission 20p.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
St Joseph's School
Rough Hay Road
Darlaston
Saturday, November 26, from 2pm till 4.30pm.
Tombola, cakes, toys, straws, fancy goods, raffle and santa plus more stalls. Refreshments available.
Admission 20p.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
St Mark's Church,
Ocker Hill Road, Tipton,
DY4 0UT
Saturday, November 26, 1pm

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
St. Mary's Church
Wednesbury
Saturday, November 26
12.30pm
Lots of Stalls & Refreshments.
Admission 20p

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
Warley Woods Methodist Church, Abbey Road, Smethwick, B67 5LS.
Friday, November 25 7pm - 8.30pm and Saturday, November 26 between 11.30am -1pm.
Santa's Grotto, lots of stalls, plus hot food.
Admission 30p.
On 128 Bus Route

CHRSITMAS BAZAAR
Sacred Heart
Holy Souls
Church Hall
Victoria Road
Tipton
DY4 8SN
Saturday November 25
12 noon
Many stalls and Father Christmas.
Admission 30p

SMETHWICK OLD CHURCH CHRISTMAS AND CRAFT FAYRE
Saturday, November 26.
Dorothy Parkes Centre, Church Road, Smethwick.
11am to 4pm.
Vintage tea room, with homemade refreshments, craft goods, raffles and tombola.
Children's Choir from Uplands Manor School.
Father Christmas.
Admission 30p.

WINTER FAIR
Charlemont Methodist Church, Charlemont Road, West Bromwich, B71 3DU.
Saturday, November 26.
11am to 12.30pm.
Admission Free.

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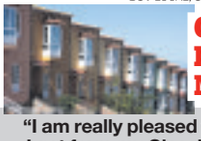

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10 Personals

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full time - general

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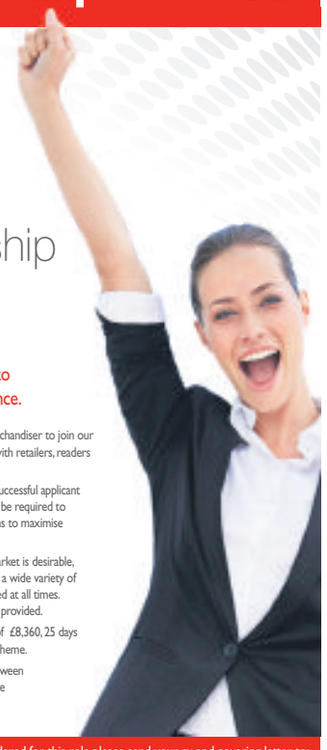

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ClassifiedAds

City car offering space, good price and economy

The Celerio has deeply sculpted flanks

The front grille is unusual with a three-bar design

The core engine in the Suzuki Celerio range is a 1.0-litre three-cylinder petrol unit developing a total of 66bhp at 6,000rpm and 89Nm of torque at 3,500rpm, so you're going to need to give the throttle pedal a bit of treatment to get anywhere. Especially if you opt for it with the brand's efficient AGS automatic gearbox. This system features an Intelligent Shift

Control Actuator positioned at the top of the transmission that operates the gearshift and clutch automatically. With AGS, the driver can enjoy the ease driving of an automatic in city traffic, but without any loss in fuel efficiency or increase in CO2 emissions that would normally be the case with a conventional torque converter equipped automatic transmission. There's even a low speed 'creep' facility which allows the car to move in gear without the accelerator being applied, ideal in slow traffic and when parking.

The alternative Celerio powerplant is another 1.0-litre petrol unit with the same output, this one using Suzuki's more efficient Dualjet technology. Power goes to the front wheels via a five-speed manual gearbox at first, but we suspect that most UK buyers will want to talk to their dealer about matching the Dualjet engine technology to Suzuki's Auto Gear Shift (AGS).

The Celerio probably isn't going to turn too many heads, being a fairly generic-looking citycar in the modern mould. That's not to say its styling lacks merit, just that it's nothing too adventurous. The most notable flourishes are probably the deeply sculpted flanks, with an arcing swage line that runs just below the door handles. The front grille is unusual, with a three-bar design that kinks upwards at each extremity into the big headlight pods.

Prices start at around £7,000 for the SZ2 version, rising to around £9,000 for the plushest SZ4. If you're happy with the mid-range SZ3, then your dealer will offer you the option of Suzuki's more efficient 'Dualjet' 1.0-litre petrol engine – for a price premium of around £500. If instead, you had your eye on the top SZ4, there's the advantage that this trim level comes with the option of efficient AGS automatic transmission – for an £800 premium. This system features an Intelligent Shift Control Actuator positioned at the top of the gearbox that operates the gearshift and clutch automatically.

Standard specification highlights for the Celerio SZ3 include six airbags, ESP stability control, air conditioning, alloy wheels, DAB Radio, CD Tuner, USB, Bluetooth connectivity and remote central locking. The even higher equipped SZ4 model adds polished alloy wheels, rear electric windows, front fog lamps, body coloured door mirrors and chrome front grille.

The standard 1.0-litre triple engine makes some very respectable figures, eking 65.7 miles from a gallon of unleaded and emitting just 99g/km of carbon dioxide. Go for the AGS-equipped automatic model and there's no running cost penalty.

If you're happy with a stick-shift and don't mind a modest £500 price premium, then Suzuki's more modern Dualjet 1.0-litre petrol engine is a better bet in this car. This engine incorporates twin fuel injectors for improved fuel economy; Dualjet technology positions the fuel injectors very close to the engine inlet valves and allows for a finer fuel mixture which in turn provides a more effective transfer into the engine. This unit also incorporates a stop start facility when stationary. In Dualjet form, this Suzuki's combined cycle fuel consumption improves to 78.5mpg, while the CO2 return is enhanced to 84g/km. That'll make such a Celerio the cleanest and most fuel efficient new car on sale for less than £10,000.

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Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, November 24, 2016

Seriously hot hatch well worth the wait

Civic Type R is a race car for the road but but loves behaving in everyday use

By Sharon Walters

It's a tough decision to make but by a fair margin my current choice of hot hatch is the excitingly fun to drive Honda Civic Type R.

This race car for the road has been around for about a year and marked the start of a new performance era for Honda – firmly putting the marque back in the spotlight.

Fans of the car had to wait five years for the updated Type R which has the most extreme and high-performing Type R engine ever built, a direct-injected turbocharged 2.0 litre VTEC TURBO petrol engine which delivers power, torque and performance figures unmatched in the front-wheel drive hot hatch segment. But it was worth waiting for. In the past year it has set new standards and is a breathless drive – where you want it to be!

It is a multi-award winner and a prototype lapped the formidable Nurburgring in 7:50.63.

And to set that in proper context, the time is just 10 seconds off the pace of the Porsche Cayman GT4. On top of that it beat the former front-wheel-drive record of 7:54.36 set by the Renault Mégane RS 275 Trophy-R.

And that proves just why it is a race car for the road. But at the same time this car loves behaving in everyday use.

Hot looks and hot driving in Civic Type R

I haven't been lucky enough to take it round any race track but can vouch for its performance taking on winding country roads – where if you push the +R button the dash turns from white to a deep and glowing red. That button makes the already firm suspension 30 per cent stiffer, makes the throttle more responsive and the steering weights up.

The result is an athletic and lithe car wrapped around you. It certainly made me feel a lot younger and fitter! When you come out of a bend and hit the gas those extra sticky low profile tyres do simply glue the car to the road.

My commute to and from work around winding and usually deserted country roads in stunning countryside is always enjoyable in almost any car. But the Type R made me beam and beam and beam.

For cruising, especially for long distance motorway runs, it's best to put the chassis back into normal mode from R making the ride more comfortable.

Inside the standard Honda Civic Type R (£30,000 on the road) has a reasonable level of equipment, including 19-inch alloy wheels, keyless entry, climate and cruise control, a parking camera, LED headlights, hands-free Bluetooth phone and deflation warning system. I was one up in the GT which has just about everything you could want including more safety kit, dual-zone climate control, automatic wipers and headlights, all-round parking sensors and the all-singing all-dancing Honda CONNECT infotainment system (which you also get in the R) but with the addition of sat-nav, premium audio with 320w and eight speakers and a CD player.

Plus in both you get performance meters with displays of cornering g-forces and 0-62mph sprint times, as well as a series of LED gearshift lights that illuminate as you get close to maximum revs.

You also don't suffer from storage shortages, with fair-sized door pockets, a glovebox that can actually hold items, a decent central storage area and a coin tray. And you can get enough luggage in the boot for a holiday. Maybe not enough for a family but plenty for two.

There's loads of Alcantara, contrast stitching and red highlights on the dash, steering wheel and doors. The front seats are deep buckets making you think you are a racing driver, and while you have to be careful exiting if wearing a skirt they are very comfortable.

From the outside some might say it's a little too 'boy racerish' but I loved the deep front bumper with lots of scoops and cooling ducts, sexy flared wheel arches with massive 19-inch alloy wheels, and my favourite – quad exhausts.

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Do you want economy? Kia Niro may fit the bill

As sleek and squat as a hatch

By Ian Donaldson

WANT a car that uses less fuel than the one you drive at the moment? Well, the obvious way is to choose something designed with economy in mind. The car you see here might well fit the bill.

It won't cost the earth (prices start at £21,295 and top out at £26,995) and the new Kia Niro works hard to keep fuel consumption down, thanks to combining petrol power with an electric motor and big battery.

Without trying, you will see a figure comfortably the right side of 40mpg – even cruising the motorway at the same speed as all the cars in the outside lane. But here's the thing; show a bit of restraint and that figure will charge towards 60mpg and you'll arrive almost as quickly and a lot less stressed. I know because those figures – 43mpg, getting a move on and 57mpg with a little restraint – shone out from the Niro's dash after a drive in two versions of this Korean-built newcomer.

The economy choice is up to you (and applies to every other car of course, not just a new Kia) but is perhaps

The Niro is a very mild sort of crossover

most sharply shown in something like the Niro because it really is not designed for all-out sporting action.

Instead we have a car designed from scratch – with an expensive to develop platform all to itself – to provide a family of five with enough space to travel in comfort with lots of luggage and not use too much petrol.

Helping achieve that hoped for economy (up to 74.3mpg official), is a 104bhp petrol engine and a 43bhp electric motor that drive the front wheels through a six-speed automatic.

It will manage short distances on battery power alone but most of the time the two systems are at work, with the battery recharging itself as you slow down and the electric motor turns itself to braking. Even with both power sources at work the car feels simply fast enough, not fast – with 101mph flat out and 11.5 seconds to 62mph quoted. But it's all done with the minimum of fuss as the gearbox chooses the right ratio.

Style-wise, the Niro is another entrant to the burgeoning ranks of crossover vehicles – cars designed to look like a loose mix of sturdy off-roadster and slick hatchback. The world can't get enough of them at the moment, so it would be churlish of Kia not to oblige.

You'd have to say the Niro is a very mild sort of crossover; looking almost as sleek and squat as a hatch and certainly needing no higher a climb into the driving seat. The result is that it slips through the air more easily than most crossovers, to the benefit of fuel consumption and wind noise.

There are four versions of the Niro, logically called '1', '2', '3' and First Edition. All share the same engine and gearbox, although if you choose grades '3' or First Edition they come with smart 18ins alloys in place of the standard 16-inchers and put out more CO2 (101g/km versus 88g/km) and use considerably more petrol in the official test (64.2mpg plays 74.3mpg).

Trying a version of both on some fairly undemanding roads, both showed a little over 43mpg. Slowing down and driving with economy in mind transformed that to 57.8mpg. The smaller wheeled Niro rode the worse roads better, although you'll have to take the official economy drop if you fancy one of the higher-specced.

All have dual zone auto air conditioning, all-round electric windows, DAB radio, USB and AUX ports, a trip computer, cruise control and Bluetooth connectivity.

Move to level '2' (£22,795) and additions include a reversing camera and satellite navigation, while the £24,695 grade '3' brings a bigger touchscreen and powerful JBL sound system.

Top of the tree is the £26,995 First Edition, with active cruise control, automatic emergency braking, electric sliding sunroof, leather trim and heated seats – front and rear, with a cooling facility in the two at the front.

So, any version is unlikely to leave you feeling shortchanged on fixtures and fittings. The usual Kia seven years/100,000 mile warranty is as good as it gets and the newcomer does well on economy too – even better when the driver helps out.

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Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, November 24, 2016

The Ioniq benefits from a traditional hatchback layout

Hyundai's Ioniq hybrid is definitely worth looking at

By Anthony Martyn

Hyundai's new Ioniq is here to take on the Toyota Prius, so we went to find out whether it's a worthy rival to the popular hybrid hatchback.

The Ioniq benefits from a traditional hatchback layout, which means decent levels of space for all passengers. Up front, the driver has a reasonable amount of seat and wheel adjustment, which means that finding a comfortable position isn't too tricky.

Likewise, the front-seat passenger has plenty of room and bags of stowage space. The door bins are certainly big enough for bottles of water and other everyday items. In the rear, passengers won't feel too short changed when it comes to legroom.

Those back seats split 60/40 too, adding to the boot's capacity of 443 litres. Speaking of the rear storage space, 443 litres sounds respectable, but is in fact quite shallow. Owing to the fact that the car's large lithium-ion battery is placed at the back of the car, luggage space is limited, and that's something families may want to consider.

The entire cabin has a solid feel to it, though, although there are some areas where the impression slips – the plastic window button surrounds are nastily hard, for example. Nevertheless, the overall feeling is of a car that is well screwed together.

Passengers won't feel short-changed for legroom

It's relatively well equipped, too, with the dash dominated by a large eight-inch touchscreen system which integrates navigation, multimedia and Apple CarPlay, as well as Android Auto.

It's also worth mentioning that while the Ioniq comes with Hyundai's impressive five-year unlimited-mileage warranty, it also covers the lithium-ion battery for eight years, or just over 180,000 miles.

Okay, so the Ioniq isn't going to set hearts racing when it comes to driver involvement, but that said, it is more interesting to drive than rivals. We got a good run in the hybrid version, which will no doubt be the most popular.

The main component worth mentioning is the IONIQ's six-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox, which does well to recreate a normally fuelled car's power delivery. It's especially well suited to driving around town, where it appears the majority of Ioniqs will spend their time.

If you want to enjoy a winding B-road, though, the gearbox can be placed in sport mode, which allows it to hang on to gears for longer, but in reality this does make the whole car feel strained. It's best left in drive, then.

The Ioniq falters more when it comes to steering, with very little feedback despite the fact it feels quite heavy.

At times it becomes difficult to precisely know which direction the wheels are pointing, which can be unnerving – especially at higher speeds. That said, the Ioniq rides impressively well, and it's quiet and relaxing at high speeds with very little wind or road noise entering the cabin.

The IONIQ starts at £19,995 for the entry level Hybrid 1.6 GDi SE. This brings with it 15-inch alloy wheels, a rear-view camera and rear parking sensors. There's a decent amount of kit, and you'll even find Autonomous Emergency Braking – something plenty of premium rivals aren't throwing in just yet.

At the other end of the scale is the most expensive Ioniq Electric Premium SE. This commands a reasonably hefty price tag of £30,795, but does include front and rear heated leather seats and a heated leather steering wheel.

We can see the Hybrid Premium SE being the most popular model by far, as it offers good value for money at £23,595.

Also, thanks to that hybrid powertrain, it'll be far more usable than the all-electric model – especially for those looking to do longer trips.

A big reason to take the Ioniq into consideration is its price. With the base car coming in at £19,995, it's what you might call 'reasonably priced' – and it'll definitely be worth looking at if you're thinking of making the move to a hybrid family hatch.

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Bull in familiar pose – he scored 306 goals in old gold and black

Turner swoops for two

How The Express & Star reported the signings – and the end of Bull's career

Express & Star

Wolves star to quit after knee problem flares

BULLY – THE END

Mystery mail attack on father-of-two

Bully went on to win 13 England caps and played at Italia 90

Steve Bull and Andy Thompson on joining Wolves 30 years ago

No Bull – signing broke the Black Country divide

THE Black Country divide was crossed in a bright orange Ford Cortina the day Steve Bull's legend was born at Wolves 30 years ago.

A Thursday that began at West Bromwich Albion and finished at Molineux occurred on 20 November 1986.

Andy Thompson also made the trip to talk to Wolves about a £70,000 double deal.

Both were contenders for the first-team at Albion, who had just been relegated to Division Two.

Wolves, however, were beginning the first of their two seasons in the bottom tier. Graham Turner's arrival as boss had steadied the ship, while Baggies counterpart Ron Saunders was busy clearing out much of the squad at the Hawthorns.

'Bully' had been plucked from West Midlands League outfit Tipton Town in 1984, whose manager Sid Day also worked as a scout for Albion.

Waited

He had made his first-team debut under Nobby Stiles on 23 October 1985, replacing Garth Crooks as a substitute in a 2-1 Full Members Cup win against Crystal Palace. He waited a further five months for his league debut, a 1-0 defeat at Queens Park Rangers on 12 April 1986. His full bow came at home to Sheffield Wednesday 10 days later.

That would turn out to be his only football in the top-flight, with three more Second Division appearances and two League Cup appearances the next season before he was sold.

Bull used his first wife Sarah's old car to drive himself and Thommo to put pen to paper at Molineux. Over the next 13 years Bully surpassed John Richards' goalscoring record with 306 in 561 games.

The former John Ireland at the ground has been re-

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Craig Birch

"We were just Black Country lads who wanted to play first-team football and he guaranteed us that."

named after him and he's an honorary club president. He was made an MBE in 2000 and won 13 England caps, going to the 1990 World Cup.

He debuted at home to Wrexham two days after joining, a 3-0 defeat, and played in the FA Cup humbling against Chorley before a lifeless loss at Lincoln.

He said: "I was 21, at the time, and very immature. I didn't really know that much about football and I'd only been a professional for about 18 months.

"Sid Day was a scout for Johnny Giles and Nobby Stiles and my manager at Tipton Town. He got me the chance with Albion. I was doing 13 hours a day in a factory and then training Tuesday and Thursday night with the youth-team at Albion. I left my job to go and play football.

"I only did that when I got my deal and I knew I had to make the most of it. I rolled my socks up and hard work, sometimes, pays off. When they decided to sell me, I'd just scored three goals in five games but there was also Garth Crooks, Imre Varadi and George Reilly up front. I just don't know why I didn't fit into Ron Saunders' plans."

He added: "Molineux was not the best then, sometimes when I'm there now I just stop to look at the place and think 'what a transformation.' We came through reception and to the manager's office, where Graham (Turner) came out and wanted to see us separately. I went in, then Thommo.

"He told me that day what the club would be like in 30 years time and he was absolutely bang on.

"We were just Black Country lads who wanted to play first-team football and he guaranteed us that. It was a run-down club offering a like-for-like deal, but Albion didn't want to give us a chance and Wolves opened doors for us."

Thompson will always be associated due to his part in the transfer that took them both away from Albion. He was valued at £20,000 with Bull costing £50,000 at a time when Wolves had escaped financial ruin just a few months earlier.

Scouted

Featherstone-born Thompson netted 45 goals in 451 games over 11 years. It was a wrench for him to leave Albion, initially, having come through the youth ranks and he didn't think he was given the send-off he deserved.

Thommo said: "I was 13 when I went to West Brom. I got scouted playing for a kids' team in Bloxwich.

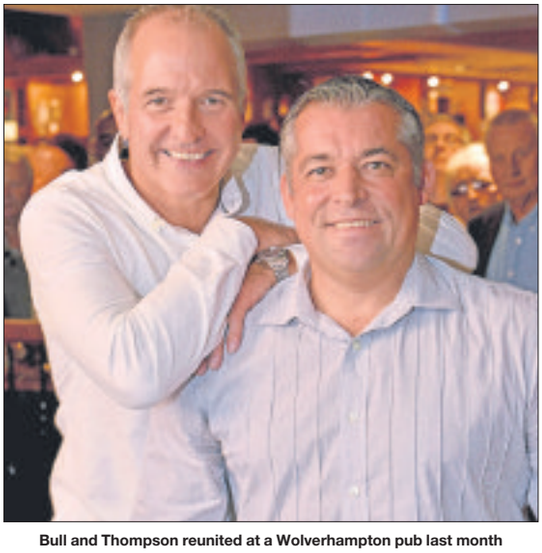
"I was in the team at the time that I left. That was the thing that I couldn't understand. It turned out to be the wrong decision for the club.

"We'd come from West Brom, which was a nice ground at the time, but there was just something about Wolves. Graham sold the club to me.

"He was building a young team and he thought he could do great things."

Bull and Thompson were not the last to leave Albion for Wolves that season, with winger Robbie Dennison jumping ship for £20,000 on transfer deadline day in March 1987. Now 53 and living in Halesowen, he spent 10 years at the club, playing 353 times, scoring 49 goals.

The former John Ireland Stand at Molineux, now named after Steve Bull



Bull and Thompson reunited at a Wolverhampton pub last month

Steve Bull is presented with his MBE by Her Majesty the Queen

Sport

Bully points the way to 30-year club association

Page 55

Zaber's title bid ended by cut eye

A NASTY cut curtailed Manny Zaber's hopes of claiming his first pro title as Josh Baillie went away with the British Challenge super featherweight belt.

Zaber, from Old Hill, was retired at the end of the fifth after a massive gash opened up above his left eye ending what was supposed to be an eight-rounder.

The battle headlined Errol Johnson's Black Country Boxing show titled 'Going For Gold' at Walsall Town Hall on Saturday night.

Former Midlands, English and British lightweight champion Martin Gethin outpointed Liam Richards in a hometown bout – and is immediately back in action this weekend.

'The Quiet Man' had his hand raised for the 27th time in his 36th pro bout. The 32-year-old had hinted at retirement, but fights again on Saturday at Wembley Arena against John Wayne Hibbert for a title, which may be for the WBC International super lightweight belt.

Hot prospect Zach Parker settled for a points win, 60-54, over Adam Jones.

West Bromwich's Thomas Loach was the star of the other three four-rounders, scoring a third round stoppage at welterweight over debutant Jerral Spencer.

Wolverhampton's Joshua Burke was beaten by his gumshield as he was docked two points for losing his equipment. Six times the gumshield came out during a cruiserweight bout against Russ Henshaw, costing him a draw. Burke lost 39-37 on the cards.

Chasetown's Luke Jones' bout with Northern Irishman Alec Bazza at lightweight, was over at the end of the first round. The two butted heads accidentally, leaving both with a cut above the left eye. Bazza's injury was ruled too severe to continue and a victor could not be decided on points.

Berahino admits his struggles and is back in France

UNSETTLED Albion striker Saido Berahino has returned to France after admitting 'struggling for focus'.

The 23-year-old flew back to a conditioning camp where he spent the first week of the international break to see a sports psychologist. An emotional personal statement posted on the club's website confirmed he had been living 'in turmoil' for the past 12 months, ever since Tottenham tried to sign him.

It read: "I have had a good, constructive talk with Tony Pulis and the club's senior management and we all agree this is the best way forward for me. This last year has been the most difficult of my career and it has left me short of the form and fitness required for the Premier League. I have never been a player who lacked confidence or a belief in himself but that has been where I have found myself and it has hit me hard.

"It has left me feeling depressed and struggling for focus."

Last Thursday, Pulis said Berahino came back from France 'brighter and sharper'. But it was later decided to send him back to France.

Whittaker strikes gold on GB debut

Gold medal fighter Benjamin Whittaker

DARLASTON'S Benjamin Whittaker showed his podium potential to claim a gold medal on his tournament debut for Team GB.

Whittaker shot down his middleweight rivals at the Golden Gong competition in Macedonia to be the pick of the bunch at 75kg.

The 19-year-old scored two unanimous points victories, over Slovakia's Luka Mejcah and Serbian Aleksander Kostic.

Whittaker said: "It's good to get the first fights under by belt for Team GB and to get a gold medal. Hopefully, it's the first of many. It's my goal to become a full-time podium boxer."

Boxing

The Black Country influence within the podium potential squad is heightened by head coach Bob Dillon, Dudley born-and-bred and the founder of Lions Boxing Club. Alan Vaughan and Phil Sellers were also on hand as trainers in Macedonia.

Whittaker has also switched allegiances at club level, leaving Wodensborough where he won three national titles. He's now with Firewalker in Wolverhampton, where his godfather Joby Clayton is a coach, and training three times a day working on cardio, strength and boxing training.

BAGGIES JUST FOUR-MIDABLE

Albion 4 Burnley 0

ALBION struck four unanswered goals past a hapless Burnley side to win back-to-back games for the first time this season and move into the top half of the Premier League.

In a scintillating performance from start to finish, the Baggies mirrored the result of the last meeting between these two at The Hawthorns and recorded their biggest league win since that day in September 2014.

Scoring four at home for the second time this season, Matt Phillips, James Morrison and Darren Fletcher were all on target in a one-sided first half, before Salomon Rondon rounded things off just after the hour mark.

It was Tony Pulis's biggest league win since joining the club. As the Smethwick End sang his name during a rip-roaring first half dominated by the Baggies, thoughts turned to the trip to Bournemouth in September when the die-hard away support told the head coach in no uncertain terms what they thought of his football.

Blocks

How things change. Albion were superb on Monday night, flying out of the blocks to sweep a shell-shocked Burnley team aside with clinical ease in the opening 45 minutes.

Pulis kept faith with the side that outplayed Leicester and he was rewarded almost immediately when £5m signing Phillips opened the scoring four minutes in. Twelve minutes later, long-serving Morrison made it two from two. In the 37th minute they added a third, a sumptuous team goal tucked home by captain Fletcher.

Albion weathered a mini-storm before adding a fourth in the 64th minute. This time Allan Nyom pulled the ball back to Rondon, who swivelled and squeezed in his fourth goal of the season.

Before the match there were concerns that it may be one of the lowest Premier League gates at The Hawthorns. But thanks to the club dropping the ticket price to £15 for adults, just over 23,000 turned up. They'll be pleased they did.

James Morrison notches Albion's second goal in the 4-0 romp over Burnley

Yozza misses out after epic comeback

ANOTHER fantastic comeback from Tipton's Jamie Hughes went awry on missed doubles at the last as he went out of the Grand Slam of Darts at the second round stage.

Hughes had Wolverhampton Civic Hall rocking as he came from 9-5 down to level the scores before a last leg shootout. He missed five match darts, including a no score visit during a last-gasp attempt at 24, allowing Chris Dobey back in to settle matters with his first attempt at the same number.

The Black Country thrower played his part in a thriller at the Civic with four 180s and two 177s, the latter against the darts on the way. Dobey hit five maximums. Hughes had the throw for the 19th and final leg, a 140 leaving him 24 with Dobey not on a finish. He ended up bust.

His second visit saw him miss the board completely with all three goes at double 12, with Dobey pouncing on 24 with his first attempt.

Michael van Gerwen won the Grand Slam for the second time.

Cup defeat is avenged by visitors

St Leonards RUFC 12 Wednesbury 18

WEDNESBURY spoiled the party as they gained revenge for an earlier Staffordshire Cup defeat.

This was St Leonards past players' celebration day attended by Staffordshire RUF committee. But it was the visitors celebrating by the end of the game.

It was not a classic, and with all their dominance Wednesbury failed to take many of the chances they created.

It took them only eight minutes to get their first points as Neil Sherwood finished off a superb forwards move to go over. Dan Till converted.

Within two minutes they increased their try count to two through Jack Bray.

The lead was extended through a Till penalty before St Leonards reduced the arrears with a try before the break.

During one of their forays into the St Leonards half Wednesbury's forwards took the ball towards the towards the try line. Chris Handley dragged the ball over the line but the referee declared the ball not grounded. The rest of the game dragged on with repeated stoppages by the referee which led to a lot of extra time at the end of the game.

With 80 minutes on the clock Wednesbury were awarded a penalty, which Till converted. With 12 minutes of extra time played St Leonards pulled back a try and conversion.

Wednesbury coach Gary Summers said after the game it had been a very difficult game but was glad of the win. This weekend Wednesbury entertain league leaders Trentham, ko 2.15pm.

Wednesbury 2nds had a comfortable win against St Leonards 2nds 31-12 with tries from Simon Wallace, Andy Clark, Olly Beard, Dan Heinz and Martin Brotherton and three conversions from Simon Wallace.

Many positives as women lose out

Warley Women 0 Bournville Ladies 27

WITH four games of the season gone, Warley's performances are improving and this score wasn't a reflection of how well they played.

Having just 11 players available Warley called upon other teams to ask whether any ladies were available to take the total tally for both teams up to 15.

Bournville won the toss and decided to have the first kick and scored the first try, not converted. They went on to score five tries in all.

But Warley heads were held high and there many positives from the game.

★★★

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